

THE
More Excellent Way
TO
Edifie the Church of CHRIST
OR A
DISCOURSE
CONCERNING
LOVE:

The Design of which is to Revive that
Grace (now under such decays) among
Protestants of ALL persuasions.

By NATHANAEL VINCENT, M. A.
Minister of the Gospel.

1 Pet. 4. 8. And about all things have fervent Charity among
your selves.

Phil. 4. 5. Let your Moderation be known unto all men, the Lord
is at hand.

Gal. 5. 13. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed ye
be not consumed one of another.

Εἰ γὰρ ἐκλησθῆτε κατὰ τὴν χάριν καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην ἣν ἠγάπησεν ὁ Θεὸς
τοὺς υἱοὺς αὐτοῦ ἀποστασάντων· καὶ ὡς ἀνθρώποι ἐκλήσθητε ἀποστα-
σάντων, ἀλλὰ οὐ κατὰ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ σαρκὸς, ὅς ἐστι ἐν φιλονεικίᾳ καὶ
ἐν ὀργῇ καὶ ἐν θυμῷ καὶ ἐν ἐκδίκησιν, καὶ ἐν ἐκδοῦναι καὶ ἐν ἐκδοῦναι
Christ in 1 Cor.

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More Excellent Way

OT

Edifice the Church of St. R. 121

OR

DISCONTINUED

CONCESSION

IVOL

the Design of which is to be a
Trace (now under the name) of
the Design of A. J. Pennington.

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TO THE
READER.

READER,

Although my Name be in the mouths of many,
and Tongues have scourg'd it most severely,
and most false Reports have been
spread concerning me both in City and Coun-
try; yet I could more patiently have born the kil-
ling of my Reputation, if the Honour of God
had not been at all concerned. A regard to his
Name, and his Gospel's Credit, prevail'd with me
to break silence; and Love to others, makes me
fear their being scandalized to their prejudice.
There is a design driven on by Hell and Rome, to
introduce Atheism in order unto Popery; to make
men really of no Religion, that they may not stick
to profess themselves of the Romish, when they shall
apprehend 'tis for their Secular Interest. Now be-
cause some mens lives by the Grace of God have
been unblameable, and tended to convince the World,
that there is a reality and power in Godliness; these
upon this account are singled out, and loaded with
Calumnies and Reproaches; that being persecuted

To the Reader.

as Hypocrites; all Religion may
the more easily be suspected, as a
cunningly devised Fable.

Let not those who have stupified their own Con-
sciences, think that I have acted of late against
Mine. Though I think I ought not to keep at such
a distance from the Church of England, as I
did; yet I have no preferment in it, neither can
I submit to the terms of such preferment. Nay,
I have exceedingly hindred my own secular ad-
vantage, by my Moderation, which is not the way
to thrive in such a Violent Age as this. A mo-
derate man is like one that parts two which are
fighting; instead of being thank'd, he is lik'd by
neither; he has blowes from both, for wishing
them no worse a thing than Peace.

From prophane tongues I expect lies and slanders:
That Master whom I serve, met with no better
usage. He was called a Wine-bibber, a Friend
to Publicans and Sinners; nay, said to have a
Devil. But though the Slander be never so gross,
it shall not hinder me from praying for the Slan-
derer; and I hope I shall be enabled to live so still,
as that no body shall believe him. If Professors
who are Non-conformists, speak against me, and
censure me as a Temporizer; My Answer is, That
with me 'tis a small thing to be judged of
them, or of mans judgment. My own Consci-
ence speaks other kind of language; and in that
one, I have Mille testes, a thousand Witnesses of
my Integrity. God is convincing me of the vanity

To the Reader.

ty of popular Applause; and how soon that kind of wind may turn and change. And if a Conviction of this makes me more humble and low in my own eyes, Dishonour will do me a far greater kindness than Praise. I will say to Humility, O & præsidium, & dulces decus meum, my safety, and sweet Ornament; and next unto Heaven, expect the greatest rest to my Soul, in the exercise of this lovely Vertue.

The fury of those who have been most enraged against me, has but heightened my love to them: I have poured out more prayers and tears for them than they are aware of; and they will know what a true Friend I have been to them, when they come into another World. Those whose Heads are hotter than their Love, shall not move my anger, but my pity and sorrow: And let them call me what they please, I shall own what is good in them; and requite their Censures with Supplications, that their Light and Faith, their Humility and Love may be increased; and that they may do nothing unbecoming the Children of the God of love and peace; nothing prejudicial to the Church, or to themselves!

I have preached heretofore to multitudes, while I was permitted: For all the Churches in London not being able to hold the tenth part of all the Inhabitants, I thought they had better hear a Doctrines agreeable to the Articles of the Church of England, from my mouth, than not hear at all. But it never was my practice to preach up

To the Reader,

a party; and it troubled me to see how much of Religion is placed in smaller things, as appears by mens eagerness about them: As if some thought a Church, others thought a Conventicle like the Ark of Noah, out of which 'tis impossible to escape drowning in Perdition. My design all along was to bring men to God by Faith in Jesus; and that their hearts might be purified, and so persuade them to be holy in all manner of Conversation. I confess I am somewhat altered from what I was; but 'tis in the extensiveness of my love: But I am persuaded that this is an alteration for the better; and makes me more to resemble Christ. Who can justly blame me for imitating the blessed Jesus! who loves all sincere Protestants, of all persuasions, and has Communion with them all. I add no more but that of the Apostle, Rom. 15. 7. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

EPH.

EPH. IV. 16. latter part.

— *Makes Increase of the Body, unto the
Edifying of it self in Love.*

IF I had a voice as loud as Thunder, I would cry *Fire, Fire*, with a wish that all *England* might hear. A Flame is kindled much worse than that which *burnt down London*; which threatens both Church and State with ruin; and that is, the Flame of fierce *Contention*. Mens Hearts are as *hot as Hell*; their Tongues do set on fire the course of *Nature*; such wrath, such bitterness, such animosities every where appear, as plainly shew the Body Politick and Body Mystical are in a dangerous fermentation and Feaver, which I wish may not issue in dissolution and destruction. That Prediction of our Lord is fulfilled; *Iniquity shall abound, and love shall wax cold*. Lust indeed breaks out into a flame; mens Passions are hot unto the highest degree, and fury makes them

abound in transgression; but a deadly damp has seiz'd on Love. No wonder that the Churches pulse does beat disorderly, no wonder that she is languishing, and ready to dye, for Love is the cause of her increase and Edification.

Is there no Balm in Gilead? is there not a Physician there? are the spots and symptoms such as shew the disease is mortal, and that there no remedy? Though the case be deplorable, 'tis not desperate. Were my Text but minded, in it might be found a sure *Recipe*. Christ is the Churches *Head and Healer*; and were but Love revived, it would quickly bring his Body to a better and more healthy temper. Light may do much, but Love will do more. Love covers a multitude of sins; Love cures a multitude of Maladies: The Church encreases and edifies it self in Love.

Though the Apostle was a Prisoner, yet we find his Heart enlarged towards the Ephesians. Having before discoursed concerning the Mysteries of Faith, in this Chapter he presses Unity and Love with the greatest vehemency; and in order hereunto he exhorts to all lowliness and meekness: He knew that pride is the cause of contention, and that humility and love are the way both to the Souls, and to the Churches Rest. He uses great strength and cogency of Argument, that he may prevail. The Saints are Members of one Body: They have

have been regenerated, and are acted by *one Spirit*; who hath effectually called them to a *lively hope of one and the same incorruptible Inheritance*: And in that Inheritance, there is not, there cannot be the least discord. They *serve one Lord*, who is best served, when his Servants *halt agree together*. They are instructed in *one Gospel*, justified by *one Faith*, baptized in *one Name*. Finally, that *God is one*, who is a most compassionate and indulgent Father to them all: And from so many Promises, how strongly and undeniably may we conclude, that all Saints should be of *one Heart*, and of *one Soul*!

The Apostle in thus preaching Love and Peace, shewed he had a very great regard to the *glory of Christ the Head*, who is *ascended far above all Heavens*, that he might fill all things; and that he had a great concernedness for *his Body*, the Churches edification: For according to my Text, it *increases and edifies it self in Love*.

In the Words there are four Propositions worthy of our observation.

First, *The Church of Christ is compared to a Body*.

Secondly, *This Body of Christ is imperfect in this world, and therefore continually should be increasing*.

Third-

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Thirdly, The Body of Christ should diligently endeavour the edifying of it self.

Fourthly, The more Love abounds among the Members of the Church, the more the whole Body will be edified.

Proposit. I. I begin with the first Proposition: The Church of Christ is compared to a Body. The Scripture often uses this Metaphor of a Body; now a Metaphor is a similitude in a word; and indeed there is a great resemblance between an Humane Body, and the Church of Christ, as by and by will be made evident. Believers are sometimes called the Brethren of Christ, *Joh. 20. 17.* which intimates a very near relation: Sometimes they are called his Spouse, whom he has betrothed to himself for ever, *Hos. 2. 19, 20.* and that's a relation much nearer; and signifies a more intimate and dear affection and familiarity: Sometimes they are called Branches, *Joh. 15. 1, 2, 3, 4.* and this expresses a nearer Union still; and that both the life and fruitfulness of Christians depends upon their being and abiding in Christ the true Vine. But because Branches, though they grow, are without sense and feeling, so that neither themselves, nor the Vine feel any pain when they are cut or broken; therefore Believers are styled Members, the Church a Body, and Christ is the Head; who is very much concerned both in it and for it.

Eph.

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Eph. 5. 2, 3. Christ is the Head of the Church, and he is the Saviour of the Body. So Eph. 5. 6. That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel. Again, Col. 1. 18. And he is the head of the body, the Church, who is the beginning and first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Zanchinus upon this Text takes notice of two things.

1. That by the Body we are to understand *Verum Christi Corpus Mysticum*, the true Church, the true mystical body of Christ. This Church is made up of them that are really sanctified; of this Hypocrites are not members; for though such are visibly Saints, yet in truth they are under the dominion of sin, and shall receive for their hypocrisie greater damnation. The hypocrites profess themselves Christs members, yet really they are not united to him; Christ lives not, rules not, acts not in them, as he does in sincere Christians. Let them seem to be his followers, let them pretend never so highly to be his friends, yet really they are strangers, whom Christ will profess at the great day, he never knew. Luk. 13. 26, 27. Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are, depart from me all ye workers of iniquity.

Πᾶς οὐκ ἁγίος, ὁ μὴ
Phorus in scholis

2. By

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2. By the Church we are to understand the Church Militant, that part of the *body of Christ which is militant on earth*, not which is triumphant in Heaven. The Church above needs not exhortations to grow and increase in Knowledge and Grace; it needs not the means of edification: Sermons of love are not to be preached there. Glorified Saints have not the least sinful defect; they see God face to face, and Christ as he is; and their love to their Father and Redeemer is answerable to the sight they have, and as much as they are capable of. And being refined from all remainders of sin, they are become such lovely Creatures, that they cannot but love one another with a most pure and perfect love. 'Tis the Church of Christ on earth the Apostle speaks of; this is the Body that is to be edified, and alas, in how many respects, how certainly in all respects does it stand in need of edification.

In the handling of this Proposition, I shall first of all shew the *great resemblance that is between the Church of Christ and a Body*. Secondly, *What kind of body the Church of Christ is*. Lastly, *Make Application*.

In the first place, I am to shew the *great resemblance between the Church of Christ and a Body*.

1. Th

1. The life of the Body depends upon its conjunction with the Head. *Christ is the Churches life*, and the Church could no more live without Christ, than a body could remain alive after the head were severed from it. Our Lord calls himself the *Way*, the *Truth*, and the *Life* also, *Joh. 14. 6*. By his blood he frees his Church from the sentence of death and condemnation which sin had brought her under; and makes her spiritually alive by his quickning Spirit. So that the Church breaths after God, walks with him, labours in his work and service, all which are evidences of life spiritual. We read *1 Joh. 5. 12*. *He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life*. They that by faith receive the Lord Jesus, are purified, are regenerated, and shall live for ever, but as many as through unbelief reject him, remain dead in sin and doom'd to Hell. Union with Christ is a most necessary, a most happy union. The Churches life from this has its beginning, and continuance, unto consummation.

Nos Christo adglutinemur, non sicut populus Principi; sed sicut membra humani corporis suo Capiti.

2. The Head has a mighty influence upon the Body. There is a powerful influence from Christ upon his Church; and what good it does, is done by virtue of this influence. He is said to be *exalted far above all Heavens, that he might fill all things*, *Eph. 4. 10*. Whatever grace and strength, and comfort is communicated to believers, it is really and

and all from Christ. He fills Ordinances with efficacy, mercies with sweetness, afflictions with light and usefulness, and Souls with greater degrees of Grace and Holiness; out of that ~~in~~ *all-fulness* it has pleased the Father should dwell in him, Col. 1.19. Our Lord tells his Disciples they must abide in him, for separated from him *they can do nothing*, Joh. 15. 5. No wonder the Apostle professes, That *Christ is all and in all*, Col. 3. 11. Though the Body, the Church, should be never so much increased, a deficiency in the Head Christ need not be feared; neither is it indeed possible: for in him there is *all the fulness of the Godhead*. And consequently his *Righteousness* and *Grace* must needs be *sufficient* for the whole.

3. The Body has many Members, and these members have different Offices. The Church likewise *has various members*, and their different frations, relations, callings, diversify their work and duties; and yet the doing of these duties is both comely and advantageous; and the more every one does his own work, the more all are benefited. Rom. 12. 45. the Apostle tells us, That *as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we being many are one body in Christ*: And from thence infers, that All should use the gifts they have received, which are differing according to the grace and good pleasure of God the Giver. It would be unreasonable for the Ear to attempt to speak like the Tongue, or the

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the Hand to see like the Eye: The several members have their uses and work proper to them. *All are not Apostles, all are not Prophets, all are not Teachers, all are not Governours,* 1 Cor. 12. 29. There are many indeed, most in the Church, that have need to be taught and governed; and those that think themselves wise enough to instruct and govern themselves, and so despise their spiritual Guides, usually are the most ignorant and unruly, and hugely need the help and conduct of others. The members must abide in their place and calling, Masters, Servants, Parents, Children, Husbands, Wives, Magistrates, Subjects, Pastors, People, doing their duties which the Scripture in their several stations and relations calls for.

4. The Body is fitly joyned; and thus fitly joyned is the Church of Christ. The word *conspicuous* signifies that there is a *conspicuous order* among the members of Christ. Without Order an Army would be a Rout and not an Army; a Kingdom would become a confused self-destroying multitude. The Churches God is the God of Order and not of confusion. 1 Cor. 14. 33. There is a rule for Order and Government, and a subordination in the Church; 'tis not a body of levellers; if there were a perfect parity, all would affect to rule, none would care to be ruled. The reproof of two or three, is more than the reproof of one; the Churches admonition and censure is still with greater authority. The flock is to submit themselves

to

to their Pastors who are over them in the Lord. Heb. 13. 17. and both Pastors and people are to submit especially unto Christian Magistrates, who are prophetically promised in the Old Testament, that they should be *Nursing-Fathers* to the Church under the New. A right Order in Churches and Families, will have a mighty influence to make believers stedfast against temptations both to Error and Wickedness. The Apostle rejoiced in the *Colossians*, chap. 2. 5. when he beheld their order, and the stedfastness of of their faith in Christ.

5. The Body is compact together, so is the Church of Christ; the word *συμμετέχοντες* shews that the Church is firmly knit unto Christ the Head, and the members one unto another. The *hypofratical Union* between the Natures of Christ shall never be dissolved, neither shall the *mystical union* between him and his members; and if so, then his true members must needs remain closely knit together. There are ligaments, joynts, bands, whereby the Body of Christ is held together: The Spirit of Grace, and Love unites the body to Christ, and members to members. The Ministers of Christ are subservient unto this union; and ought to be preaching and commending love, which is a grace of an uniting nature. The Apostle had a concernedness for the *Colossians*, which he expresses by a great conflict, and that which he willed so vehemently for, was this, that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, Col. 2. 1, 2. Where

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Where is the member of the natural Body that grows weary of its fellowship, and is willing to be cut off. The Arms, the Hands, the Legs, the Feet, are desirous to keep their places; and nature makes them abhor to be severed. True grace makes the members of the Church to dislike separation. As they believe so, they very well like, and are desirous of the communion of Saints. A very black mark is set upon them who are of a contrary inclination. 1. Joh. 2. 19. *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest they were not all of us.*

6. God hath set the Members in the body as it pleased him; the different gifts and graces which are in the Church of Christ and the members of it, are according to Gods will and pleasure. He bestows larger gifts upon some, and less upon others; and yet those that have less, are not unuseful. Some Saints receive greater measures of Grace, others smaller; but all have that grace which is true, and which at last will end in glory. Some members of the Church are higher, others lower, and yet they should not envy or despise one another; for God has assigned their place unto both: the higher, may direct the lower, the lower may serve the higher. *The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor the head to the feet, I have no need of you; and those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary.*

1 Cor. 12. 21, 22. By the grace of God the members of Christ are what they are. They have nothing but what they have received; and the more any have received, the more humble and diligent they should be; for where much is given, much will also be required.

7. In the Body Nourishment is conveyed unto the parts, and the whole is hereby sustained. The body of Christ also by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. Col. 2. 19. The Church of Christ has food to eat which the world knows not of, it has spiritual senses, a spiritual appetite, and its food is spiritual. The word of God is compared to food; here is milk for Babes, and stronger meat for more grown Saints. No food so profitable and nourishing, no food so pleasant, no food so necessary. Heark to the profession of Job, chap. 23. 12. Neither have I gone back from the commandments of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food. David cries out, How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea sweeter than honey to my mouth. Psal. 119. 103. And the Prophet speaks to the same purpose; Jer. 15. 16. Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.

The body of Christ is nourished by his Word, and other Ordinances are appointed for the increase of this body. A famine of this word deserves to be dreaded as a very sore judgment.

The

The better the food, if it be well digested, the better the chyle, and the purer the blood; and the body will be more prosperous and healthy; the more purely and sincerely the word of God is dispensed, the members of Christ will become stronger, and the inward man be the more renewed day by day. As Christ gives his word, so he vouchsafes himself to be food to his members. *His flesh is meat indeed, his blood is drink indeed.* Joh. 6. 53. And by this they are nourished unto that life which is eternal. It might also be added, that Christ is the cloathing, as well as the nourishment of his Body; his Righteousness is the Robe which covers their guilt and nakedness, his Grace beautifies and adorns his Saints; therefore they are bid to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and to make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof. Rom. 13. 14.

8. In the Body, the Members and parts are operative and active for the good of the whole; in the Church there is an *effectual* working in the measure of every part, that the whole may be increased. The new Nature which is in sincere believers, inclines them unto all that is suitable to that nature; sloth is exceedingly opposite unto Religion. God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him: to seek him negligently is indeed to neglect him. The mem-

bers of Christ are industriously to do their duty towards their Father, and their Head, and likewise towards one another; hence it is that we read of the labour of love, which the Apostle requires and encourages, *Heb. 6. 10, 11, 12.* *God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love which you have showed towards his Name, in that you have ministered to the Saints and do minister; and we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end; that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.* The members of Christs Church are to be active, but in their place, and calling; for if they act irregularly, that action will be against the Body, and to its prejudice, not to its edification. Every part has its place, and that place it must keep, and not aspire higher without a call; and that measure of grace which it has received, it must faithfully exercise, with a regard to the Churches good as well as its own.

9. The whole Body and all its members are animated by one Soul; and the Church with all its true members are animated by one and the same Spirit. We read *Eph. 4. 4.* *There is one body and one Spirit;* and again *1 Cor. 6. 17.* *He that is joyned to the Lord is one Spirit.* The same Spirit which is in the Head, is in all the members which are joyned to him; And the Apostle sticks not to say, *If any man have not the Spi-*

ris of Christ, he is none of us; Rom. 8. 9. All that light which the members of Christ have, is from the Spirit; he has caused a marvellous light to shine into their hearts, which before were under the power of darkness; he likewise is the worker of that liberty and ability which they have unto what is good: whereas before they had a freedom, but it was only to evil continually. These members of Christ are all changed into his image, which is their glory: but the beginning of that change, and the progress of it unto greater glory, is from and by the Spirit. 2 Cor. 3. 17, 18. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, but we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even by the Spirit of the Lord. The Spirit dwells in all true believers, and Christ has promised that he shall abide in them for ever, Joh. 14. 16, 17. Soul and Body indeed may be separated, but the Spirit and the Saint shall not.

The very bodies of believers are affirmed to be the Temples of the Spirit, where he dwells and abides, 1 Cor. 6. 19. What know ye now that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which you have of God, and ye are not your own? And if the body be his Temple, surely the Heart and Soul should be as it were the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, the holiest of all, fill'd with light and grace, that it may be also fill'd with peace and joy.

10. The Body is under the Souls conduct and command; *the Church is conducted and ruled by the Spirit of Christ.* The eyes do see, the ears hear, the hands work, the feet move, according to the Souls will and pleasure: and as it has *despoticon imperium*, the command and government of the members, so it acts them, and their operations are from the Souls presence; for if the Soul were gone, the body would immediately become a clod of Earth, and the members be deprived of all strength and motion. The Spirit of Christ commands and acts his Members; he makes them to see the invisible God, and that world which is invisible; he makes them hear the voice of Christ, so as to obey his call; he makes the hands holy, having first purified the heart, and employes them in working Righteousness: He turns the feet into the way of Gods testimonies; and strengthens believers so as that they run, and are not weary, they walk without fainting.

A Christians conversation is styled a walking in the Spirit, Gal. 5. 16. *This I say then, walk in the Spirit;* in his Light, in his Strength, and according to his will, *and fulfill ye not the lusts of the flesh.* Without this walking, 'tis a vain thing to pretend to be in Christ, or to hope for justification by his Righteousness; for the Son of God was made a Sacrifice for sin, *that the Righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in them, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit,* Rom. 8. 4.

What

What kind of Saints would there be! What exemplary Members! What illustrious Assemblies! if every one had in a greater measure crucified the flesh with its lusts and affections, and had a more attentive and obedient ear to ^{hear} what the Spirit saith unto the Churches. You see the Resemblance between the Church of Christ and a Body.

In the Second place I am to tell you, what kind of body the Church of Christ is.

1. The Church is a *Body of Men*. Ezek. 34. 31. *And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord God.* I grant the Elect Angels have Christ to be their Head; but all the Apostate Ones were left in that misery into which by sin they brought themselves. And though the Son of God be the Lord and Keeper of the Holy Angels, yet he is not *their* Redeemer, as he is of his Church, for whom he died. When this Saviour was born, the Tongues of Angels proclaimed peace on earth, good will towards men; Luk. 2. 14. Though the World lye in wickedness, yet the Church is gathered out of the World. The Saints themselves were sometimes dead in sins and trespasses, and walked according to the course of this world, according to the Prince of the power of the air; fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind; and were by nature the Children of wrath, even as others. Eph. 1. 1, 2, 3.

All the Stones of Gods Spiritual Temple are dug out of the common Quarry of Mankind; and to keep them humble, they should often look to the rock from whence they were hewn. All the Sons and Daughters of the Lord Almighty, are of Adams lapsed race without exception. The Grace of God is admirable, in making a Church of such as these: The Body of the first Adam was formed out of the dust, but the Mystical body of the second Adam was formed out of that which is a great deal worse, a meer masse of corruption. And as there is not a Saint, but was once a Sinner; so those Sinners who are chosen, and called, and made faithful, they are not of the wise commonly, or of the mighty, or noble of the World: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the World, to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things despised, yea, and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence; but according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord, 1 Cor. 1. 27.-31.

2. The Church is a Body governed by the best Law: The Lord himself is their Law-giver; and he is holy, and just, and good; and his Commands are like himself, holy, just, and good also, Rom. 7. 12.

There is a Law in our hearts, Law of sin, which the

the men of the world obey. This Law commands what the Law of God forbids, forbids what the Law of God commands: Darkness and light are not more contrary, than these two Laws are. But this Law of Sin is *visus in corde*, a Law of Death: Obedience is destructive to him that yields it. The Law of the Lord is quite of another nature; there is life and peace in the doing of it; *Prov. 7. 2. Keep my Commandments, and live, and my Law is the apple of thine eye.* *Psal. 119. 165. Great peace have they that love thy Law; and nothing shall offend them.* The more the Church conforms to the Laws of her Lord and Head, she recovers the more of the Image of God which was lost by the Fall, and partakes the more of the *Divine Nature*, escaping that corruption that lust causes in the World. This Law is written in the Heart, which is changed and renewed; and the Heart being suited to the Commandment, delights in obedience: *Psal. 40. 8. I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy Law is within my heart.* This Law is of the highest authority, therefore the Saints should endeavour to keep it without spot; and whatever penalties they suffer, they will never have reason to repent of their faithfulness to their Lord, or their obedience to his Precepts.

3. The Church is the *wisest Body* and *Stellar* in the World. Indeed all the World besides are a company of meer Fools and mad men.

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Are not they fools that hate knowledge? are not they fools that joyn with Satan to undo themselves? are not they fools who venture for a meere trifle, a little sinful gain or pleasure, to lose their precious Souls, which are of more value than the whole World put together? are not they fools, who have Salvation, Life, and Immortality offered to them, and neglect the offer? who are warned to flee from future Wrath, and the vengeance of eternal Fire; and yet will needs run thither, and are angry with any that endeavour to stop them? Oh, how has sin bereaved men of their Wits and Understandings!

But the Church of Christ is sayingly enlightened, all her true members made wise unto Salvation: They are so wise as to make their peace with God, believing in Jesus, and relying on his blood for Reconciliation; they are so wise as to follow the Lamb, and that path must needs be best and safest, wherein he leads them: They are so wise as to make timely provision for eternity; and to commit the keeping of their Souls into a strong hand, which never lost any that it undertook to keep and to secure. Therefore the Apostle speaks with so much confidence, *2 Tim. 1. 12. I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.* What is the wisdom of this World compared with the Churches wisdom, which is
 spiri-

spiritual? the Apostle undervalues the policy of Princes, in comparison of the Gospel; that policy comes to nothing; this Gospel guides to glory; 1 Cor. 2. 6, 7. *Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the Princes of this world, (who yet get most by their wisdom) but come to nothing: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory.*

4. The Church is a Body of great beauty and excellency, called therefore in the Song of Solomon, the fairest among women, Cant. 5. 1. *Sion is affirmed to be the perfection of beauty, Psal. 50. 2.* The Church is excellent in regard of her Original, for she is of Heavenly extraction, and born of God himself: All her true members are new Creatures; they are beautified with the image of God, and resemble him in Knowledge, Righteousness, and true Holiness. As Sin is the greatest deformity, so Holiness is the truest beauty; 'tis this which makes the Angels shine; nay, 'tis the glory of God himself. *Exod. 15. 11. Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the Gods! who is like thee, glorious in Holiness!* How certain is it, that the Righteous man is more excellent than his Neighbour: Now the Church is called the Generation of the Righteous.

The Church is likened to a Woman, because the Woman excels the man in beauty; but the

she is such a Woman, as the like is not to be found: *Rev. 12, 1. She is clothed with the Sun, the Moon is under her feet, and upon her head a Crown, not of Gold, and Diamonds, but better; a Crown of twelve Stars.* What can equal this Glory of the Church? *All flesh is grass, and as the glory of man as the flower of the field, which soon withers, and fades away.* She is said to be clothed with the Sun, because justified by Christ, the Sun of Righteousness; the Moon is said to be under her feet, because all changeable things are below her spiritualized and raised Affections; the twelve Stars, which are her Crown, signifie the Doctrine of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb, whereby she is enlightened, and brought at length to that light which is everlasting.

5. The Church is a *Body of great strength*; for this Body is strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Sinners are without strength; they cannot please God, they cannot profit themselves; but the Churches members are strengthened with might by the Spirit in their inward man; so that they can do things beyond the power of Nature; they can see the invisible God, they can believe against hope, they can overcome and deny themselves, they can wrestle with the Almighty, and as Princes prevail with him; they can foil the Principalities and Powers of darkness, they can fight the good fight of Faith, and lay hold of eternal

nal life; and all these are mighty acts indeed, too great to be performed by any that are Hypocrites and ungodly. The Church is most opposed, and yet is most victorious; and will still abide in the world, notwithstanding all the worlds rage; like the *Immortal Regiment* among the *Persians*, that never was destroyed till the Empire was destroyed; for, if any Souldier was killed, another presently was lifted in his room. This bush of the Church is unconsumed in a flame; nay, it has been most green and flourishing when the flame has been fiercest. God has strengthened and preserved her, and her preservation may be look'd upon as one of the greatest Arguments and Miracles of a Providence.

6. The Church is a *Body to whom the whole world is beholding*: It should be the joy, for it is the security of the whole earth. How soon would the *Tares* be pluck'd up, bound in bundles, and cast into the fire, if it were not for the *Wheat* which grows among them? *Mat. 13. 29.* The Church is a Friend, and wilhew well to Mankind; 'tis her Prayer, that Gods way may be known on earth, and his saving health among all Nations; that the *Kingdoms of the World* may become the *Kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ*: And like a Mother, she is in travel for the conversion and salvation of a greater multitude of Souls. Why should the World be angry, and recompense evil for good? they

they should all be wise at length, and desire to be incorporated into the Church, and be resolved to go with her; for they may be well assured that God is with her. Zech. 8. 23.

7. The Church is a Body that will at length by many degrees be made more glorious than it is at present. Now 'tis truly sanctified, 'tis highly dignified; but it does not yet appear what it shall be; 1 Joh. 3. 2. But when Christ the Head shall appear the second time, without sin, to salvation, what a glorious Church will appear with him! Col. 3. 4. Every member will shine as the Sun in the Fathers Kingdom. Mar. 13. 43. And what a glorious spectacle will that be, to behold all the Saints together in a company, and every one of them shining forth as the Sun; and the Son of God at the head of them all! How with our cries and groans, and serious diligence in preparing for it, should we continually be hastning the coming of that day of God! Christs Body, the Church, has its defects and blemishes, while it sojourns here below; but at the last day all the spots will be off, all the wrinkles smoothed, and the end of Christs death will be fully attained. Now the Apostle tells us, He gave himself for his Church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, and present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish: Eph. 5. 26, 27. How gorgeously apparel'd, how richly

richly adorned, how amiable and lovely will the *Lamb's Bride* at last be, when Satan shall be quite vanquish'd, Death swallowed up in Victory, and sin shall cease to have a being! when light shall be without any darkness, joy without sorrow, purity without the least mixture of defilement! When Christ does put the Crown of Life upon his Churches Head, then that Scripture will be fully verified, *Can. 4. 7. Thou art all fair, my Love, there is no spot in thee.*

I come now to the Application.

USE. I. Let the Church and all the members of it, consider their relation unto Christ their Head, and do that duty which such a relation calls for: They are *Christ's*, and not *Admonitions*; they are *Christs*, and not *their own*; they are his purchase, his Spouse; nay parts, and pieces, and Members of him, which he has bought, and united to himself: 'Tis highly against all reason, that they should seek, or please themselves in a sinful and self-destroying manner.

Their Duty towards Christ, their Lord and Head, is in several Particulars.

1. The Members of Christ should love him in great sincerity. The Apostle wishes, *that the grace of God may be with all such sincere Lovers*, *Eph. 6. 24.* Dissembled and seeming Love is really none at all; and in several respects worse than

than none. Christ's Love to his Church was most real: How exceeding low was his humiliation, that she might be advanced! how great his Sufferings for her eternal Redemption! The Apostle speaks as one amazed at the height, and length, and depth, and breadth of this love of Christ, *much passes knowledge*, Eph. 3. 18, 19. And if the Head be so full of love to all the Members, certainly the Members will be in the worst sense unnatural, if they return not love to their Head and Saviour; they should prize him most highly, *counting all things but loss and doing that they may win him*, Phil. 3. 8. They should mourn when he withdraws, but rejoyce exceedingly when they enjoy his presence, and see his face who is *altogether lovely*. They should value his Word and Ordinances, in which he is to be found, and delight themselves in the contemplation of his fulness, and that great and everlasting Salvation whereof he is the Author. Their very *Souls should love him*, Cant. 3. 4. which expression intimates both the truth, and the strength and fervency of affection; and truly our Lord is so excellent, that there is no danger or possibility that Love to him should be excessive.

2. The Members of Christ should endeavour to promote his Honour and Glory: They should be very zealous that their Head may be advanced, and have the preeminence over all things. Their tongues should be showing forth his

his praises, commending him to the World as the best of Princes, as the only Saviour; and declaring the unreasonableness of the Worlds prejudices against his *yoke and burthen*, which are so *easy and so light*. Mat. 11. ult. They should earnestly desire that Christ their Lord, may be the Worlds Universal Monarch; and that all Earthly Kings and Emperors may cast down their Crowns before him, and willingly submit to his Scepter and Government.

3. The Members of Christ should obey all his Commands. Joh. 14. 15. *If ye love me, keep my Commandments.* And v. 21. *He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.* It is a monstrousness in Nature, if any of the Members should not be placed under the Head: Surely then all the Members of Christ should readily be subject to him. Thus to be Subject is to Reign. Obedience is the great Sacrifice to be offered under the New Testament; the Saints are styled *Priests*; Kings as well as Priests; *Βασιλεὺς ἱερὰ τεύχη*, a Royal Priesthood, 1 Pet. 2. 9. So that to obey the Lord Jesus contains in it no less than a Regal Honour. He should be revered, all his Commands performed. He that hears Christs sayings, and *doth them*, is the wise *Builder*, whose House shall never fall; is indeed the blessed man, and is in the right way to Life and Immortality. Rev. 22. 14. *Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have right to the Tree*

of Life, and may enter in through the gates into the City.

4. The Members of Christ should live by faith upon him: They are to expect the Remission of sin, and deliverance from wrath to come no other way: when they have done their best and most, they must look unto Jesus, that they through him may be accepted: For there is no way to be accepted, but in the Beloved. Eph. 1. 6. In all their Temptations, Sorrows, Sufferings, they are to depend upon him for succour, joy, and Grace sufficient. The Body is secured, and in the Spiritual Warfare, has both conduct and conquest by acting Faith in Christ the Head. Every Member therefore should imitate the Apostle, who said, *Gal. 2. 20. The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

5. The Members of Christ should do nothing unbecoming his Members. The Glory and Name of Christ, and the Credit of the Gospel should be very dear to them; and they ought to be blameless and harmless, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation; and shine as lights in the World. Phil. 2. 15. They should manifest that they abide in Christ, by walking as he walked; they should be patient, meek, and lowly as Christ was, condemn the world as he condemn'd it, count it their meat and drink to do the will of God as he did: and since

since Christ endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, so should they. Though the Foes of Christ are numerous, and oppose his interest with never so great force and fury, yet his members must never be ashamed to own their Head, nor afraid to follow him. It becomes them, and it concerns them to cleave to him *with full purpose of heart*, Acts 11. 23. For to leave him is to be lost for ever, and to bid farewell to blessedness, and life eternal.

USE II. Let the Members of this Body the Church, consider the relation they have one to another. They are indeed very near, and should look upon themselves as very near one to another: And this Relation should be of mighty efficacy to perswade them to perform those mutual Duties which are incumbent upon them. In the general, All particular Members should consult the good of the whole Church: They believe the Holy Catholick Church, and their Love should run parallel with their Faith; and care will be an effect of true Love. A private Spirit is very prejudicial to the Body of Christ, whilst only one part is minded, and not another: 'Tis just as if there should be an endeavour to make one member of the Body natural great and strong, with an unconcernedness how weak, and feeble, and small soever the other Members remain. 'Tis lamentable that

there are so many Parties in the Christian Church; but 'tis more to be lamented, that these Parties are so selfish, and so little mind the common interest; which being neglected, their private interest cannot be regarded so truly as it should be. For if a whole Town be burnt down to the ground, no particular house escapes the fury of the flames: No mans Cabin can be secured, if the Ship be cast away, and sinks to the bottom of the Sea.

There are several Counsels which I would intreat the Members of the Church to follow, that it may be the better with the Church, and with themselves.

1. Let not the *higher Members despise the lower*. You that are higher, *what have you that you have not received? why then should you glory, as if you had not received it?* 1 Cor. 4. 7. That's a Scripture whose sharp point should prick the bladder, and let out pride and self-conceit-ness. Phil. 2. 3. *Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.* Moses the holiest and most useful man in his time, was the meekest man upon earth, Numb. 12. 3. The Apostle Paul, though he laboured more abundantly than all the Apostles to spread the Gospel and Faith of Christ, yet in what an humble style does he write of himself, and surely his Heart and Pen went together, 1 Cor. 15. 9. *I am the least of the Apostles, that am not worthy to be called*

called an Apostle. Nay, he abases himself beneath all Saints, as well as all Apostles, and ventures the Critick's scoff, in coining the word *ταπεινω*, to shew how low he was in his own thoughts: Eph. 3. 8. *Unto me who am less than the least of all Saints, is this Grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.*

2. Let not the lower Members of the Church be discontented. Every Member is highly favoured, highly honoured; every Member is under the Head's care, and shall at last be fully happy in and with Christ Jesus. To be a Door-keeper in the House of God, was look'd upon as an honour and Priviledg by a King of Israel, *Psalm* 84. 10. The least degree of true Grace is more worth than all the Gold and Silver that God has made. Saints are to be blamed when discontented because they are not of the highest rank; for all Saints are Children, all are Heirs, all are first-born; therefore the Church is called *ἐκκλησία πρωτόγονον*, the Church of the first-born, *Heb.* 12. 23. nay, they are all, even the meanest of them, advanced to Kingly Dignity. *Rev.* 1. 5, 6. *To him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God, and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever.*

3. Let the Members of the Church be sensible of the need they stand in one of another. How much are the higher Members of the Body be-

Holding to the Feet, which are the lowest of all! the Body could not go without them, but only lame, and a Cripple. God has ordered it so in his Church, that as the Members are to have their main and principal dependance upon Christ their Head, so they are to have some kind of dependance upon one another: and the reason is, that those two excellent Graces of *Humility* and *Love* may flourish among them. Though the Hand by the Philosopher be fitly called *apud Philosophum*, the most useful Member, yet it cannot do every thing: It cannot see like the Eye, nor speak like the Tongue; and if a man should attempt to go upon his Hands, he would walk after a sorry and odd fashion. The strongest Saints, nay, the ablest Ministers are beholding to the meanest Believers, the stronger are encouraged when the weaker do their Duty. A word sometimes from a weak Christian, may be much to the edification of a Christian more grown. The Apostle says, *Be ye fed*, if the *Thessalonians stood fast in the Lord*, 1 *Thess.* 3. 10. And a beggar could not beg more heartily for an Alms, than he did for the Prayers of the Saints at *Rome*. *Rom.* 15. 30. *Now I beseech you Brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christs sake, and the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in your Prayers to God for me.*

Let the Members of the Church have the same care one of another that they have of themselves,

selves, 1 Cor. 12. 25. In the natural body it is thus; if the Face be struck at, the Arm endeavours to ward off the blow; if the Body be in danger in one place, the feet are ready to carry it to a place of greater strength and safety. Christians should be concerned for their fellow Christians as for their fellow Members: and mind that of the Apostle more, 1 Cor. 10. 24. Let no man seek his own; that is, his own only, but every man another's wealth.

4. Let the members of the Church sympathize with suffering members. We are commanded to weep with those that weep, Rom. 12. 15. The sorrows of afflicted Christians should be ours, and we should feel their burthens. 'Tis the glass eye that sheds no tears, 'tis the wooden Arm and Leg that feels nothing: Every Member of Christ should be full of Bowels. The Injunction is plain, Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them, and them which suffer adversity as being your selves also in the body. Those were upbraided, and threatened severely for their carnal security and hardness of heart, who were at ease when Zion was in trouble, and were not at all grieved for the afflictions of Joseph, Amos 6. 6.

6. Let the members of the Church be concerned about such fellow members that are sinfully disordered. If any part of the body natural aile any thing, all the other parts are ready to afford the utmost relief and assistance they

are

are able. And why should Christians be careless of Christians, as if they were of *Gentiles* temper, who said, *Am I my Brothers keeper?* If a beast be fallen, we pity him, and are ready to help unto the lifting him up again; and should not a member of Christ who has fallen into sin and hurt himself so much by his fall, move our compassions? We are indeed carefully to avoid infection by those that are lapsed; yet 'tis our duty to restore them in the Spirit of meekness, considering our selves, lest we also be tempted, Gal. 6. 1.

7. If one member of the Church be honoured all the members should rejoice with it. Is the hand envious at the eyes quickness? or the ear envious at the hands activity? Envy is as unreasonable in the body mystical, as in the body natural. We ought to rejoice in the gifts of others, and in their graces, and in their usefulness; as the Spirit of God who has given these gifts and graces, and has made them thus useful, will be grieved, and we shall hinder our selves of that profit which we our selves might reap from them.

8. Let there be no discord among the members of the Church, but they should perfectly agree together. By that *Apologue* concerning the unreasonableness of the Members falling out with the Body, *Menenius Agrippa* did put an end to a contention that was likely to prove fatal, between the Roman Senate and the common people.

people. How unreasonable would it be that the hand should envy the eyes, and endeavour to put them out? that the feet should take it amiss that they are lowermost, and should fall a kicking all the parts which are within their reach? Discord among Saints is such a kind of unnatural and foolish contention. If *Abraham* the Father of the faithful said unto *Lot*; *Let there be no strife between Me and Thee, for we be Brethren*; Gen. 13. 8. surely Christians & *forniori* may argue with one another. Let there be no strife among us for we are *Members*; *John* 15. 1. *Rom.* 12. 5. *1 Cor.* 12. 27.

USE III. Let the World take heed how they deal with the Church which is the Body of Christ. *Luther* observation, That if any part of the Body be hurt and pained, the signs of feeling appear in the Head, the Brows are contracted, the Tongue cries, Oh! the Visage is altered. Christ the Head, knowes all the sorrows of his Church, nay in all her Afflictions he is afflicted. When *Saul* made havock of the Body on Earth, the Head in Heaven cries out, as having felt his fury; *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* Act. 9. 4. Let the world be wise, and the highest and greatest in it, for whatsoever injuries are done to Christians for Christs sake, he accounts them as done to himself; in hurting his Body they strike him there where he is most tender, most sensible, and such blows without Repen-

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tance, will be dreadfully revenged. Christ who is the Churches Head is to be the Worlds Judge; and if when the Lord comes with ten thousands of his Saints, hard speeches shall be remembered; Surely the Worlds hard usage of his members shall not be forgotten, shall not pass unpunished. If at the great day, the *not feeding and cloathing of hungry and naked Saints*, will be punished with *everlasting fire*; oh what a sin will it be found to take away their food and rayment from them? if Christ will be so angry with those who *wished not believers in Prison*, Mat. 25. 42, 43. where shall they appear that were the Imprisoners of them? The World should not be cruel to Christians, since Christ will quickly appear to judge the World in Righteousness. So much for the first Proposition, *The Church of Christ is compared to a Body.*

Proposition II. The second Proposition is this, *This this Body of Christ is imperfect in this World, and therefore continually should be encreasing.* Hence it is that Christians are exhorted to grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. 3. 18. and not only to be steadfast, and unmoveable; but always to abound in the work of the Lord, 1 Cor. 13. 48. In the handling of this Proposition, I shall first shew, in what respects the Church of Christ here on Earth is imperfect. Secondly, In what sense the Church should be continually encreasing. Thirdly

ty, I shall produce several Reasons for this Increase of the Church. Lastly, I shall give you the Use that may be made of it.

I begin with the first of these; and shall show, in what respects the Church of Christ here on Earth, is imperfect. Two things are here to be considered. First, The number of the Churches Members is not yet compleated. Secondly, Those Members which actually are of the Church, are imperfect, the very best of them, as long as they remain in this World.

1. The number of the Churches Members is not yet compleated. There are more still to be called out of the World, and brought home to Jesus: All are not gathered, which the Father has designed to give him, *John 10. 16. And other sheep I have, who are not of this Fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one Fold, and one Shepherd.*

2. Many 'tis to be hoped, who have heard the Gospel, shall be converted, though as yet they are not. Though they have hitherto resisted the Holy Ghost, yet at last they shall yield unto his Call and striving. When once the day of power, and the time of love is come, they shall be made willing to receive a Saviour, to be the Lords, and to serve the Lord; though now never so great an obstinacy and unwillingness is discovered. *Psal. 110. 3. In a little time shall I call them, and they shall come, and they shall stand before me, and they shall be made willing to receive a Saviour, to be the Lords, and to serve the Lord.*

2. Many who are in the loyns both of Believers and Unbelievers, shall in due time be born, and born again. The Church shall never quite discontinue; it may indeed sometimes be less visible, but it always has a Being. God will have a Seed to serve him in every future Generation. *Psal. 22. 30.*

3. The Natural Branches are to be grafted in again to their own Olive-tree. *Rom. 11. 24.* For if thou wert cut out of the Olive-tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good Olive-tree, how much more shall these, that is, the Israelites, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own Olive-tree? Blindness in part is happened to Israel, but they are still beloved, for their Fathers sake; and at length the veil which is upon their Hearts, shall be taken away, and they shall look unto him whom their Fathers crucified, and be saved by him: For he is the Messiah, the deliverer that is come out of Sion, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. *Rom. 11. 26.* Now when Israel shall be added to the Christian Church, how will this Church be increased! it will be a very glorious augmentation, like a Resurrection from the dead. *Rom. 11. 15.* For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the World, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?

4. The Kingdoms of the world are to become the Kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ, *Rev. 11. 15.* I grant this is in part already; the Gentiles have

have been preached to, and have obeyed the Gospel; Christ, according to the Fathers Promise, has had the *Heaven* given to him for his *Inheritance*, and some of the *uttermost parts* of the *earth* for his *possession*; but we may rationally conclude, after the destruction of Antichrist, and the utter overthrow of his power and usurpation, that many more Kingdoms of the world will submit unto the Lord Jesus; and his Church hereby will have a vast increase. We find *Rev. 18. Babylon destroyed*, the *Kings of the earth*, and the *Merchants* that committed Fornication with her, crying, *Alas! alas!* and lamenting her sudden and utter downfall; *The Heavens*, and the *holy Apostles and Prophets* rejoicing over her, because God had avenged them upon her. And then it follows, *Rev. 19. 12.* that upon the head of Christ were *many Crowns*, which shews the subjection of many *Kings* to him: and *v. 6.* there is a voice of a great multitude, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thundrings, as if all the World did joyn together in saying, *Alleluia*, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. From all this it appears that the Church as yet is incomplete: and that greater numbers of Converts are to be expected; and how should the Promises of the Churches enlargement in the latter dayes, be thought upon with joy; and how earnestly should we pray that those Promises may be accomplished!

2. Those Members which actually are of the Church,

40. Love Edifies the Body of Christ.

Church, are imperfect the very best of them, as long as they remain in this World. How plainly does the Wise man speak, *Ecol. 7. 20.* There is not a just man upon Earth, that doeth good and sinneth not. There is many a just man upon earth; and every just man his practice is to do good: but there is not one that so does good, as not to be chargeable with the least evil. The Apostle James that is so much for joyning good works with faith, yet acknowledges in many things we offend all, *Jam. 3. 2.* And the Apostle Paul, that great Saint and Preacher, speaks thus of himself; (and surely he would not tell a lye through abundance of humility: *Phil. 3. 12, 13.* Not as though I had already attained either were already perfect, but forgetting the things which are behind and reaching forth to those things which are before. I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God. The imperfection of the Saints and Members of the Church on Earth, will be evident in several respects.

1. The Knowledge of the Saints is imperfect. He that knew as much as any, sayes, *We know in part, and prophesy in part, and now we see through a glass darkly, 1 Cor. 13. 9. 12.* David, who was wiser than his enemies, who had more understanding than all his Teachers, than the Ancients; yet prays still that God would teach him, that God would open his eyes, and give him understanding, *Psal. 119.* which expressions shew a remainder

of ignorance in him, a trouble at it, and a desire after a more perfect instruction.

2. Holiness at present is imperfect in the best of men, as well as Knowledge. Other Graces cannot be perfect, if Knowledge be not. He that does not know the evil of sin so fully as he ought, cannot hate it so much as he should. He that is imperfect in his knowledge of God and Christ, must needs fall short in his Faith and Love, and holy Fear, and Reverence. There is not one sanctifying Grace in us, but needs further degrees. The Apostle makes it the constant work of Believers here below, *to be cleansing themselves from all filthiness both of the flesh and spirit, and to be perfecting holiness in the fear of God,* 2 Cor. 7. 1.

3. The victory over spiritual enemies is not yet fully obtained by militant Saints. They are combating but they have not conquered, they resist Satan, and force him many times to flee; but he returns again and renews his assaults: and the God of peace has not yet done it, though he has promised to tread him under their feet shortly, Rom. 16. 20. They have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts; but though the flesh is fastened to the Cross of Christ, and therefore the old man is said to be crucified with him; yet the flesh struggles upon the Cross: the Body of Sin is not quite destroyed, some fleshly and worldly lusts and affections are stirring which are not totally mortified

tified. Militant Saints are not as yet compleat Conquerours, for their enemies still make a head, and continue the war, though at length they shall be made *more than Conquerours through him that loved them*, Rom. 8. 37.

4. The *Joyes of believers also are imperfect*. All tears shall at last be wiped away from their Eyes, but at present their Eyes are full of them. The worlds wickedness, and folly in that wickedness; professors degeneracy; the Churches divisions, and distresses and corruptions; the dreadful tokens and signs of Gods displeasure, if not of his departing; finally, their own spiritual distempers, which are so far from being perfectly cured; alas! these are enough to hinder their joy from being perfect.

5. Their *Happiness is as yet but an imperfect Happiness*. All the world are miserable besides, and the Saints are the only happy ones; and yet these by many degrees are not so happy as they shall be. This sad effect sin has by coming into the world, that not a man, not the best man can be fully happy, till got out of the world. The Churches true members are happy indeed, because *God is theirs*, Psal. 144. *etc.* because *Christ is theirs*; but they must needs be happy only in part, because God and Christ are but in part enjoyed.

In the second place I am to shew, in what
sense

Forse the Church should be continually increasing.

I. The Church should endeavour to increase in numbers, and that the stone cut out without hands may become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth, Dan. 2. 34, 35. 'Tis the worlds misery that it hates and keeps at a distance from the Church of Christ. But if this world were but taken into the Church, and were brought to believe in the same *Jebovah*, in the same Jesus, and to yield Subjection to the same Gospel, what a New and Happy world would there be presently! This increase of the Church in numbers, is to be endeavoured several wayes.

1. Prayer should be constant and very fervent for this increase. All the Sons and Daughters of Sion should be importunate, that the City of God may be enlarged; that the Church may not have a barren womb, or dry breasts; but that by reason of her numerous Offspring she may enlarge the place of her tent, and without sparing she may lengthen her cords and strengthen her stakes, and stretch forth the curtains of her habitation, Isa. 54. 2. There is mercy enough in God, though the miserable sinners that come to him are never so great a multitude. The fulness of Christ is so infinitely unmeasurable, that 'tis sufficient to supply and to enrich the whole empty and beggar'd race of Adam. Heaven is of capacity to contain millions of inhabitants more. Let us therefore pray that the conversion of Souls may be by thousands;

and that they may sit in a cloud, and as doves to their Windows, Isa. 60. 8.

2. The promises of the Churches increase are to be believed, and pleaded. In what a strain does God speak unto his Church, what Promises does he make her! Isa. 60. 3, 4, 5. The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and Kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee. Thy Sons shall come from far, and thy Daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then shalt thou see, and flow together; and thy heart shall fear and be enlarged: Because the abundance of the Sea shall be converted unto thee: And the Forces of the Gentiles shall come to thee. And v. 11. Thy Gates shall be open continually, they shall not be shut day nor night; that still there may be greater confluence. And v. 16. Thou shalt also suck the Milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breasts of Kings, and thou shalt know that I the Lord am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob. These and such like Promises are certain; that God who has made them, is easily able to make them good: His Glory and Name, and his Sons Honour, are much concern'd in fulfilling them. And he is delighted to see his Saints desirous with a respect to his Name, that these Promises may be performed.

3. The Church is to be increased by the powerful preaching of the Gospel. This Preaching by all means is to be encouraged; for Faith comes

by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, Rom. 10. 17. Those that most preach Christ, and least themselves, are likeliest to enlarge the Church of God. Those that are most skilful to convince men of sin, that are wise to win souls, that know Christ themselves, and how to reveal him to others, and with greatest zeal do press the love and practice of Holiness; these are the Pastours after the Heart of God, and are likely to do as *Jacob* did to *Laban*, vastly to increase the Flock of Christ. The Apostle was so far from hindring the preaching of the Gospel, that he was glad it was preached by those that did not preach sincerely: Surely the Church may have some benefit and enlargement by such. Phil. 1. 15, 16, 17, 18. Some preach Christ even of envy and strife, and others also of good will: the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds; but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the Gospel. What then? Notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and therein I do rejoice, yea and will rejoice.

4. The avoiding of Scandal is much for the Church's Increase. The Scandalous and loose lives of Professors, make the World conclude the Gospel but a cunningly devised Fable; and harden the men of it in Irreligion, and a profane contempt of God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. The evil works of such as are called Chri-

rians for many of these latter Ages, has been a great impediment to the spreading of Christianity. Our Lord sayes, *Woe to the World because of offences*, Mat. 18. 7. for the World hereby is confirmed in prejudice and Wickedness, and at last more certainly ruined: But when the Members of the Church do work out their own Salvation with fear and trembling, and shew a vehement desire after the Worlds Salvation also, this is the way to gain the World to Christ, and to turn it unto righteousness.

5. The Church is mightily increased by the *exemplary conversation of her Members*. When Believers are zealous of good Works, and without rebuke and blame, When they are patterns of Piety, Justice, Mercy, Meekness, Patience, Self-denial; when they go about doing good; and by the heavenliness of their discourse and carriage, declare plainly that they *seek a better countrey* than is to be found in this World: hereby they adorn the Gospel, and render it more lovely in the Worlds eye, and more likely to be entertained: *the ignorance of wicked and foolish men is silenced by well doing*, 1 Pet. 2. 15. nay, they be forced to a confession, that God is in his Church of a truth; and may at length consent and desire to be Members of that Church, where there is so much of God, and of his presence visible and apparent.

2. As the Church should increase in numbers, so all the Members of the Church should strive to increase more and more in grace and goodness. They should strongly be induced to this; because of their own imperfection in Grace, which imperfection fills them many times with inward trouble, and tormenting doubts and fears; and makes outward affliction but highly necessary. Besides, Holiness is of such an excellent nature, and so perfective of the Nature of man, that the strongest desires are to be justified, the most diligent endeavours after it to be commended.

Grace is increased in the Members of Christ several ways.

1. By a *serious and frequent engaging in those Ordinances which he has instituted*. He that has instituted these, has promised his blessing, and adds the efficacy. Prayer, Fasting, giving of thanks, receiving the Supper of the Lord, attending upon the Word preached, and searching the Scriptures, and the like means of Grace, when seriously used, do exceedingly promote the growth of a Christian, making him to become strong in Spirit. The Church is the Garden of God; the Saints are planted there; the Word and Ordinances of Christ are like the showers from Heaven, and the Husband-mans pains, which makes these Plants to thrive and flourish. *Psal. 92. Those that be planted in the*

house of the Lord shall flourish in the Courts of our God :
 But still it must be remembered, though means
 are to be used, yet we must look beyond them,
 unto him that has appointed them, else they
 will never attain their end, 1 Cor. 3. 7. So that
 neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that
 watereth, but God that giveth the increase.

2. Grace is increased by the improving of Pro-
 vidence. The Dispensations of Providence were
 various towards David; he was exercised with
 great Severity, and likewise with great Good-
 ness; we read Psal. 118. 9. *That the sorrows of*
Death compassed him, and the pains of Hell gat
hold upon him, he found trouble and sorrow: and
v. 10. He was greatly afflicted; in this distress
he calls upon that God who is merciful and
gracious, for deliverance, and his calling is heard,
and his Soul is delivered from Death, his Eyes from
Tears, and his Feet from Falling: And now how
is his Heart affected! his Graces strengthened!
He is filled with Love, he is resolved to give
himself to Prayer as long as he lived, his Soul
is at rest in God who had dealt bountifully
with him, he offers the Sacrifice of Thanks-
giving, and he cries out, Oh Lord I am thy
Servant, Truly I am thy Servant, v. 16: as if he
should say, Lord! thou art a Master beyond
all comparison; and as it is my firm reso-
lution, so is my Happiness and Honour, as
well as Duty to be a Servant to thee.

3. The Covenant of Grace is to be Studied, and
 the

the Promises applied in order to a Christians increase. God has assured his People that he will perfect that which concerns them, and that he will not forsake the work of his own hands: He has said, that his Servants shall Spring up as among the Grass, and as Willows by the Water-courses; Isa. 44. 4. That the Righteous shall hold on his way, and they that have clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger, Job 17. 9. That they shall bring forth fruit even in Old Age, and even then be flourishing, and this shall be to shew that the Lord is upright, Psal. 92. 14, 15. Such Promises being prized and applied, will make the New Creature full of vigour, and perseverance will be certain. Hark to the Apostle, Phil. 1. 6, 7. Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ, even as it is meet for me to think this of you all.

4. Grace is increased by Having recourse unto that fulness which dwells in Christ. Therefore growing in Grace and growing in the Knowledge of Christ are joyned together; for Christ is full of Grace and Truth, and out of his fulness says St. John, We all have received and Grace for Grace, John 1. 14, 16. that is, Grace answerable to that Grace which is in him. Grace is his purchase, he has it in Possession, he gives it to all that have it, and every new degree is from the same hand; He is the Object, the Author and the Finisher of Faith, Heb. 12. 2. They are the most

X growing and established Saints; that are least taken with the World; that have least confidence in themselves; that do best understand, and most look unto Jesus.

5. All impediments of increase must be carefully shunn'd, as Pride, and sloth and earthlinefs, carnal and corrupt affections; if these, or things of like nature prevail, they will prove to the Soul, what Diseases are to the Body, and make the Members of Christ to be feeble and languish, depriving them both of their Strength and Beauty. These are like peccant humours, which must be Purged if we would have our Souls healthy and prosperous: These are like weights which must be laid aside, if we will run the Race that is set before us, so as to obtain the Prize, Heb. 12. 1.

In the third place I am to produce several reasons why the Church should be continually increasing.

1. This increase is for the Fathers glory, the more Saints there are, God is honoured by the more; and the more any are Saints, he has still the more glory from them. The stronger the members of Christ grow; their Faith in God is firmer, their fear more filial, they love him more with their heart, and Soul, and strength, they walk more humbly with him: all which shews what right apprehensions they have of him, and that they glorifie him

him as God, believing his presence, power, mercy, truth and righteousness. That our Lord might perswade unto fruitfulness and increase, he sayes *Joh. 15. 8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my Disciples.*

2. This increase of the Church is for the honour of Christ the Churches Head. The largeness of a Dominion, and the multitude of Subjects, is the honour of a Prince: The more sincere Christians there are, the Kingdom of our Lord is the more enlarged, and He himself is magnified the more. The Redeemer is glorified when the Everlasting Gospel runs; when his word which is the Scepter of his Kingdom is believed and obeyed: when Souls by whole multitudes come flocking to him, to be justified by his blood, sanctified and healed by his grace, and saved to the uttermost. How was Christ honoured, when after the ten first Persecutions the Roman Empire submitted to the Faith, the Eagle gave way to the Cross, and Constantine the Great threw down his Crown at the feet of the Lamb of God: Then was that Scripture signally fulfilled, though a further accomplishment is still to be expected, *Isa. 55. 5. Behold thou shalt call a Nation that thou knowest not, and Nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel, for he hath glorified thee.*

3. In this Increase of the Church the operation of the Spirit is very illustrious. He wrought the miracles for the confirmation of the Gospel, and made it at first to be entertained in the world. Wherever there is true Faith, it is of his bestowing. Those that are regenerated are said to be *born of the Spirit*, Joh. 3. 6. The *renewing of a Soul is of the Holy Ghost*, Tit. 3. 5. All spiritual gifts, all true grace, all solid comforts are from the Spirit. The more therefore Light is spread, the more largely gifts are distributed, the more plentiful communication there is of grace, the more peace and joy abounds; the greater is the Spirit's glory. The *Nicene Creed* calls the Spirit *verus Dominus*, the Lord and Giver of life. *Quot Membra, tot Miracula*; So many members as Christ has, so many miracles there are of the Spirit's working; for he has raised them all to life, who were once dead in sins and trespasses, as well as others.

4. This Increase is for the Churches advantage, therefore it should be endeavoured. 'Tis matter of joy and praise to Saints, to behold sinners converted and sanctified, to see Prodigals coming to themselves, and coming home to their Fathers House; to see strangers and foreigners made fellow Citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God, Eph. 2. 19. And when these Saints perceive, that more of light is imparted to themselves, and that they are filled

led fuller with the *fruits of righteousness*, which are by Jesus Christ, to the *Glory and praise of God*; they must needs apprehend this to be for their profit, if the truest riches may be called gains, and Pearls of the greatest price be of any value.

5. The *World is benefited by the Churches increase*. Not a Soul gathered out of the World, but something is secured of greater value than the World. If a City were on fire, and burning apace to the ground, the more persons are saved, the more Goods are secured, the greater kindness is done to that City; because these Persons, these Goods escape the fury of the flames. Sin is ruining the World apace; but all that in time come out from the World, and touch not the unclean thing, and are incorporated into the Church of Christ; are safe as in a Sanctuary, shall be delivered from the common destruction, and scape the vengeance of eternal fire, in which all the wicked must burn for ever.

6. The *Angels themselves are concerned at the increase of the Church*. The Apostate Ones are confounded, when by all their subtilty and strength they are not able to hinder the increase of Christ's Government; nay, that they are over-ruled, that they are made to promote his Kingdom by those very means which were designed to overthrow it. And the Elect Angels are affirmed to rejoice at the Repentance and Conversion

54 Love Edifies the Body of Christ.

version of a Sinner: Luk. 15. 10. *Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.* And if they are so glad at the Conversion of one, what an accession would it be to their joy, to behold thousands and millions, added to the Church of Christ! 'Tis pleasing to the Angels to behold peace on Earth, and Gods good-will expressing it self in the Salvation of Men, Luk. 2. 14. and upon this account they cry, *Glory be to God in the highest.*

The Application follows.

USE I. Of Reproof to them that hinder the Churches increase. The furtherers of it I am sure are few, the hinderers many; therefore the more are concerned in the Repression.

1. *Enemies without* endeavour with might and main to hinder the Increase of the Body of Christ. They hate the light, and would fain hinder it from shining; they are grieved that Jesus is preached, are angry as well as grieved; for they are unwilling his Subjects should become numerous. The World upon this account raises Persecution; and how many at such a time *do fall away!* Mat. 13. 21. Cyprian laments the pressure of that Persecution which had so wofully wasted the Flock he was over; and says that *positi erant inter plangemium ruinas, & rimarum reliquias; inter numerosam languentium stragem,*

gem, & exiguum flammam pariterem. L. 4. Ep. 4. Many were ruined, the rest feared, the Church languished; and few did stand against so furious an assault. We have large *Martyrologies*; but if all *Apostates* were registered, how vast would be the *Catalogues* of them! 'Tis well *Tribulation* lasts but *ten dayes*, a short time; else the World might tread the Church under. But the Worlds rage is without reason, against the Church of Christ, which will do no harm, and desires to do the World the greatest kindness.

2. *Hypocrites* within are to be reprov'd, for they hinder the Churches increase; fitly compared to *Vipers*, which are said to eat the bowels in which they were bred. Our Lords anger is very hot, and his words sharp against *Hypocrites*, *Mat. 23. 13.* For they shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men; they refuse to go in themselves, neither suffer they them that are entering to go in. They profess high, but when they fall, and notoriously discover their unsoundness, they wound the reputation of Religion, unto the Churches grief and disadvantage, and the hardning of the Ungodly in their wickedness; their Convictions hereby being quite and clean extinguished.

3. The Churches increase is likewise hindered by *imprudent Members*. Such are not so careful to avoid appearances of evil themselves; and they blaze abroad the Infirmities of others, which

which love should find a Mantle to cover; nay many times they hear and report the most errant lies and slanders, whereby not only the Person slandered, but likewise Religion and the Church suffers. These fools deserve to be lash'd severely for their inconsiderate talkativeness, and uncircumspect walking: And they should remember, that the Disciples of Christ are to be *wise as Serpents, and harmless as Doves*, Mat. 10. 16.

4. *Erroneous Members and Church-dividers* are deeply guilty of hindring the increase of the Church. Error has a natural tendency to division; for they that speak *perverse things*, endeavour to *draw away Disciples after them*, Act. 20. 30. And Division is a grand Impediment to edification. The Church of Christ after the giving of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, did grow exceedingly; and one reason was, because the *Multitude of them that believed, were of one heart, and of one soul*; Act. 4. 32. But division weakens the Churches strength, and turns her own Members against her, by turning them one against another. The Apostle severely rebukes the *Corinthians* upon this score, 1 Cor. 3. 3. *For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?* q. d. This unpeaceable and dividing temper makes you act not like Members of Christ, but like *Men of the World*, whom Christ bids his Disciples to be
ware

ware of, as Enemies to his Interest and Kingdom. Indeed the Corruptions of others need not to be approved; yet what is good and sound is to be own'd; and we are to be taken with the Image of Christ in whomsoever we see it shining.

5. Slothful, unfairful, proud and selfish Pastors deserve as sharp a rebuke as any, because the Churches increase is hindred by them, who are witness. Such seek their own things, not the things of Christ; their own profit, not the profit of many that they may be saved. 'Tis ordinary with them, to make the hearts of the *sheep* sad, whom God has not made sad, and so strengthen in the hands of the wicked, that he should not turn from his wicked way, by promising him life. Ezek. 34. 2. The Prophet prophesies sharply against the Shepherds of Israel, Ezek. 34. 2, 3, 4. Woe to the Shepherds of Israel who feed themselves, not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened; neither have ye healed them which was sick; neither have ye bound up them which were broken, neither have ye brought again them which was driven away; neither have ye sought them which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. Now if the flock be thus neglected, 'tis likely to be lessen'd; and the Church to be brought very low. O! dreadful account that such Pastors have to give both of themselves and of the flock, unto the Great Shepherd, at the last day!

USE

USE II. Of encouragement unto the Church of Christ notwithstanding her Imperfection. Her Spirit should not sink into despondency because perfection is not yet attained to; but several truths may be offer'd as grounds of support.

1. That Righteousness which is imputed to the Church of Christ is perfect. Though their Faith, though their evangelical obedience be imperfect, yet the Righteousness of Christ, which their faith layes hold on is every way complete. The obedience of one, that is the Son of God, is sufficient to make many righteous though never so many do believe, Rom. 5. 19. By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, Heb. 10. 14. The Apostle indeed is ashamed of his own Righteousness, and afraid to be found in it, and desires to be found in Christ, and that he might have on that Righteousness which is of God by faith. The obedience and sufferings of Christ are the Righteousness imputed to them that believe, and is called the Righteousness of God, because God contrived it, and accepts it; and Christ who obeyed and suffered, is not only man but over all God blessed for ever. Christ has done and suffered enough to satisfy divine justice, to ransom and save souls; and to obtain eternal Redemption for us: and here is a firm ground for the Churches consolation.

2. The Sins of the Churches Members are all pardon'd,

pardoned; not so much as one is unforgiven; *Eph. 2. 13. Having forgiven you all trespasses. Plal. 103. 12. As far as the East is from the West, so far hath he removed all our transgressions from us. Uxoribus non intenditur.* The Church is espoused to Christ, and he has satisfied the Law and Justice for all her offences: It may joyfully be said therefore, *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, Rom. 8. 1.* Her Head and Husband having paid the Churches debts; payment from her is not expected, shall not be demanded.

31. Though the Churches members are imperfect, yet the least degree of true grace shall be owned. The smallest Stars are Stars, and are fixt in Heaven as well as the greatest. The weakest Saints are Saints, and as such shall be regarded. 'Tis said of Christ, *He shall feed his flock like a Shepherd, he shall gather the Lambs with his Arm, and carry them in his bosom, Isa. 40. 11.* The feeblest of Christians shall have need of cherishing, and they shall have what they need. Our Lord will not break the bruised reed; nor quench the smoking flax; untill he sends forth judgment unto victory, *Mat. 12. 20.*

4. The Church of Christ notwithstanding her imperfection, is in a safer state than Adam was in Innocency. The Union between his Creator and Him, was not so indissoluble as the Union between Christ and true Believers. This was promised to him upon condition of his perseverance

severance in obedience, but he had not a Promise of Grace to make him persevere: But the Saints have such a Promise; God has said, He will put his fear in their Hearts, that they shall not depart from him, Jer. 32. 40. That he will strengthen and uphold them with the right hand of his righteousness, Isa. 41. 10. That none shall pluck them out of the hand of Christ, nor out of the Fathers hand, who is greater than all, Joh. 10. 28, 29. That nothing shall be able to separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus their Lord, Rom. 8. ult. Adam was intrusted with a Treasure in his own keeping; but he lost it, and beggar'd himself and his whole Progeny: Believers therefore are not thus trusted; both themselves and their Treasure are in the hands of him that is able to save to the uttermost; and so both are secured: *Their life is hid with Christ in God*, Col. 3. 3.

USE. III. Of Advice unto the Church of Christ, and all her true Members.

1. Let their imperfection keep them humble. There is not a Soul without a stain, nor a Grace without a mixture, nor a Duty without a failing, nor a Saint without some sin remaining. All therefore, may, the very best of all, have reason to be low in their own eyes. The more humble we are, the more our hearts are suited to our present imperfect state; and the more

more of Gods reviving Presence, notwithstanding our imperfection, will be vouchsafed. For, thus saith the High and Lofly One, who inhabiteth Eternity, whose Name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble Spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones, Isa. 57. 15.

2. Let the Churches Members hunger and thirst after a greater measure of righteousness. Those that do so, are blessed, for they shall be filled, sayes he in whom all Fulness dwells, Mar. 3. 6. This is an hunger truly sacred, that never ends in starving, but in satisfaction. We should long more for the Waters of Life; the Soul should thirst more vehemently for the living God, desiring to behold his glory, and to be changed more fully into his glorious Image. Such kind of desires widen the Souls capacity, and make it meet for a larger participation both of Grace and comfort.

3. Let the Church believe and long for that enlargement and glory that is promised in the latter dayes; but especially to be translated unto those Mansions above, which her Head is gone to prepare for her. Let her long that her Warfare may be well accomplished, her course faithfully finished, and the Crown of Life and Righteousness received: And to this end, let all her Members tear the Air, and pierce the Heavens with their cries; Come Lord Jesus, come quickly,

ly, Rev. 22. 20. Thus, of the Second Proposition; *That the Body of Christ is imperfect in this World, and therefore continually should be encreasing.*

Proposit. III. The Third Proposition follows; That the Body of Christ should diligently endeavour the edifying of it self. Before the Apostle had used the Metaphor of a Body; now he uses another Metaphor of an Edifice or Building. The Church is to edify it self, but the Power to do this is from God; and her Lord, who acts and strengthens her in this action, lays a just claim to all the glory. The Church is an Edifice, or an House, but a Spiritual one; therefore called a Temple. Eph. 2. 21, 22. In whom, that is, Christ, all the building firily framed together, groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord: In whom you also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. This Temple is holy, for God hath set apart such as are godly for himself: The Stones are lively, for all Saints are quickened, to live to God, and act for him. In this Temple Sacrifices are offered, but they are spiritual; Prayers, Praises, other Duties, and the Heart of him that performs them. And though these Sacrifices are never so spiritual yet they are not accepted upon their own account, but they are acceptable unto God through Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. 2. 5.

In the further handling of this Proposition, I shall First, Shew upon what foundation the Church is to Edify it self. Secondly, To what end this Edification must be. Lastly, To make Application.

In the first place I am to shew upon what foundation the Church is to edify it self.

1. The Knowledge of God is styled a Foundation. 2 Tim. 2. 19. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this Seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. God has from eternity foreknown and chosen his Church in Christ, that she should be holy and without blame before him in love, Eph. 1. 4. This is a Foundation laid before the Foundation of the World, and will endure infinitely longer than the World shall. The Churches Members should give all diligence to make their calling and Election sure, for if they do these things, they shall never fall, but an abundant entrance shall be administered to them into the everlasting Kingdom, 2 Pet. 1. 10, 11. Now Election is made sure by hearkening to, and obeying the call of the Gospel, and departing from Iniquity.

2. Christ the Rock, is called a Foundation, 1 Cor. 3. 11. Other Foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Though he was set at nought by the Jewish builders, yet he is the head Stone of the Corner; neither is there Salvation in any other. The Churches Faith must

be firmer in Christ; her hope in him more and more abundant; and she may build without fear; for the Foundation will never fail the Superstructure.

2. The *Doctrine of the Apostles and Prophets* is also styled a *Foundation*, Eph. 2. 20. Both were inspired by the Holy Ghost; and the harmony and agreement between Apostles and Prophets, between the Old Testament and the New, makes the Foundation more sure. The Church, that she may edifie her self, is to eye the Scripture; then she will build according to the right rule. *Unwritten Traditions* that would impose upon her Faith what the Scripture has not revealed, are to be rejected; and that *light within* that would lead her away from the written Word, is no more to be followed than a foolish Night-fire. If she has Scripture for her Faith and Practice, she has good ground for both; and both may be justified before the Judge of all the World.

3. *Obedience and good Works* are called a *Foundation*, 1st Tim. 6. 19. *Laying up in store for themselves* a good *Foundation* against the time to come, that they may lay hold on Eternal life. This is done by *doing good*, by being rich in *good works*. Though good works are not meritorious, for Eternal Life is the Gift of God; yet they are necessary to evidence our Faith, and that the Promises may be fulfilled. *Glory and Immortality* is promised to them who

by

by patient continuance in well-doing seek for it, Rom. 2. 7. He builds firm, that builds his house upon a Rock; and he builds thus, who hears the Words of Christ, and does them. But he that hears, and does them not, is a foolish man, and builds his house upon the sand; and when the rain descends, and the winds blow, and the floods come, and bear upon his house, it will fall, and great will be the fall of it, Mat. 7. 24, 25, 26, 27.

In the second place, I am to tell you, to what end this Edification of the Church must be.

The Church must Edify it self, that it may grow Stronger. The stronger her Faith is, the more will she Glorify that God in whom she believes. Rom. 4. 20. It is said of Abraham, He staggered not in the Promise of God through Unbelief, but was strong in Faith, giving glory to God. The stronger her Love, the more it will constrain her to labour in her Lords work, and cast out the fear of suffering for his sake; for a strong dose is stronger than Death, and has a most vehement flame; many waters cannot quench it, neither can the floods drown it, Cant. 8. 8, 9.

The Church must Edify it self, that it may become Larger. Prayer should be instant and constant, and pains should be taken both by Pastors and People, and Godliness should be both in Form and Power, that so the Mountain of the House of the Lord, may be established in the top

of the Mountains, and exalted above the Hills, and all Nations may flow unto it; Isa. 2. 2.

3. The Church must Edifie it self, that it may become more Beautiful and Glorious. The great day of the Churches publick Marriage to the Lamb, is approaching; how careful should she be to cleanse and adorn her self, that she may be found of him, in Peace without spot and blameless, 1 Pet. 3. 14. This Beauty and Glory which the Church is to endeavour after, and to long and hope for, you have described Rev. 21. 9, 10. Come hither, and I will shew thee the Bride, the Lambs Wife: And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high Mountain, and shewed me that great City the holy Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven from God, having the Glory of God; and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a Jasper-stone, clear as Chrystal, the walls were high, the twelve Gates were all Pearls, the Street of the City was pure Gold, as it were transparent glass: and I saw no Temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple of it: And the City had no need of the Sun, neither of the Moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. What is the glory of Solomons Kingdom or Temple, or of the whole World, if compared with the Beauty of the new Jerusalem, which the most valuable things in nature, as Gold and Jewels, are used too set forth, but fall exceeding short of what they signifie?

I shall now make a brief Application.

USE I. It is matter of great Lamentation, that the Church at present is so far from Edifying of it self, that 'tis doing quite the contrary; tis about to be *Felo de se*, to destroy and to pull it self down to the ground, if the God of Wisdom, Love and Peace, do not hinder. The Poet lookt upon it as truly lamentable, that the Roman State was engaged in a Civil War where there could be no Triumph after Victory; that Pompey and Caesar, both brave, both Roman Generals, should fight so eagerly, so bloodily one against the other: but surely 'tis one of the saddest fights in the World, to see the Members of the Body of Christ at variance, and biting and devouring, and doing that to one another, which the fiercest Persecution was never able to effect. Alas for Wool that the Church of Christ should be militant, not only because of her fighting with Enemies, but because of the Discord among her own Members.

Suis & ipsa Ecclesia viribus suis.

The Church employs her own force to her own ruine. Pastours are set against Pastours, Saints against Saints, Sermons against Sermons, nay, Prayers against Prayers, and *Sion* is become like a Babel of Confusion!

Quis talia fando

Temperet a lachrymis?

Well may the Prophets words be here applied,

plied, Ezek. 19. 14. *This is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation.*

USE II. Of Advice. Let the Churches Edification be minded: Let all study and follow the things that make for Peace, and things wherewith one may Edifie another, Rom. 14. 19. 'Tis not below the greatest of men to put their hands to this work, of Building the House of God; indeed it should strenuously be set about by All, Magistrates, Ministers, People.

The Churches Edification is to be minded by Magistrates. Their Authority should be subservient to the Authority of Him by whom they Reign, Prov. 8. 15. *By me Kings Reign, and Princes decree Justice.* The Laws of Kingdoms and States should alwayes promote and encourage the Progress of the Gospel. Truth and Holiness do ever deserve the countenance of Authority, but sin is worthy of a frown. Those Princes who are most for the Churches welfare, do most consult their own; *If Righteousness exalts a Nation, and sin be the reproach and ruine of any People.* Prov. 14. 34; then the more the Church is Edified, the more firmly both Throne and Kingdom are established. Hezekiah his Zeal for Religion was attended with a blessed Prosperity, 2 Chron. 31. 21. *In every work that he began in the Service of the house of God, and in the Law, and in the Commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his Heart, and he prospered.*

2. The Churches Edification is to be minded by Ministers: 'Tis their office more peculiarly to be Labourers together with God, in his Husbandry and Building, 1 Cor. 3. 9. They should Pray, Preach, Live so as to Edifie. Reputation and worldly advantage are poor things; Edification is most truly considerable, and should sound in their Ears, should be upon their Hearts, and endeavoured with their utmost abilities. They must be blameless as the Stewards of God, and faithfully dispense food to Souls; They must not be Self-willed, nor soon Angry, nor given to Wind, no Strikers, nor given to filthy Lucre, but lovers of Hospitality, lovers of good Men, sober, Just, Holy, Temperate, Tit. 1. 8. Then they are like to Build the House of God indented. The People also should endeavour the Edification of the Church: They should by a good example provoke one another to love and good works. No corrupt Communication should proceed out of their Mouths, but that which is good to the use of Edifying, and which may administer Grace to the hearers, Eph. 4. 29. They are to please one another for Edification. Rom. 15. 2. And in all Reproofs let Love and a desire to Edifie be apparent in the Reprover.

I conclude with a few Arguments to persuade all to Edifie the Church. The Church of Christ is hugely out of repair, the breaches are great, and there is much rubbish

rubbish to be removed: and where there is so much work to be done, the Labourers should be the greater number, and the more diligent.

2. While you are building his Church the Lord himself will be with you, and then no matter for opposition. Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the World. When *Nebemiah* was building *Jerusalem*, he was derided, he was opposed, but he was not discouraged, neither did the work cease; and the Enemies were forced to an acknowledgment that God was with him.

3. Your labour shall not be in vain, either as to success or as to reward. Some good you shall do, who do desire it, and God takes notice how much more you would do, and will reward you accordingly. The Lord is too good a Master to suffer any of his faithful labourers and servants to want encouragement. *David* had it in his heart to build him an house; and God establishes the house of *David*, *1 Chron. 17. 23.* and his family was upheld, till *Christ* the Son of *David* came. I have done with the third Proposition; That the Body of Christ should diligently endeavour the edifying of itself.

Proposit. III. The fourth and last Proposition is this. The more Love abounds among the members of the Church, the more the whole Body will be edified; but more briefly thus: Love exceeds.

exceedingly for the Churches edification. I might be large in discoursing of Love to Christ, and manifest how this will constrain all in whom it is, to endeavour the edification of his Body, and to seek the welfare of those for whom he died. One who loves the Lord Jesus in sincerity, how can he chuse but love all Saints though of different persuasions, since notwithstanding that difference they are all so dear to him, that he gave his life a ransom for them all; and the blood of God was shed for every one of them, that there might be a price paid sufficient for their Redemption.

But the Apostle is to be understood in my Text of Christians love one to another. This is that Charity which the Scripture calls so loudly for: Job. 13. 34. *A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another; the command is doubled, and called a new commandment, because though delivered long before, yet here its delivered with a new example, that of Christ himself, (as I have loved you) and consequently with a new and strongly enforcing motive. The Apostle Peter gives this charge, 1 Pet. 4. 8. Above all things have fervent charity among your selves. Gifts though excellent, may be abused, and perversely employed, to instill Error, and rend the Church of God. Knowledge if it be alone, will not profit but puff up him that has it: But Charity edifieth, 1 Cor. 8. 1. Love*

Is greatly beneficial; its acts are pure, and peaceable, and gentle, full of mercy and good fruits; and 'tis against the very nature of it to work ill to any.

In the handling of the Proposition, I shall First, *Discourse concerning the Nature of Love.* Secondly, *Discover the Properties which the Scripture attributes to it.* Thirdly, *Demonstrate how it is for the Churches Edification.* Fourthly, *Show the vanity of those excuses that are made for the want of love.* Lastly, *Apply.*

In the first place I am to discourse concerning the *Nature of love.* There is a fourfold Love, *Carnal, Natural, Civil, Spiritual.*

1. *Carnal, and impure:* Thus Amnon loved his fair Sister Tamar, 2 Sam. 13. 1. and Sampson fell in love with Delilah; but this impure affection cost both these their lives, and brought the one and the other to an untimely end. This may more properly be called *Lust* than Love; and in whatever heart 'tis harbour'd, how does it defile and harden! If but a spark of lust be let alone, what a flame may quickly follow, which may consume the Estate, the Reputation, the Body and the Soul: it may indeed be extenuated; but 'tis threatned with the wrath of God. Not only for fornication but for evil concupiscence, cometh the wrath of God upon the Children of disobedience, Col. 3. 5, 6. When Lust is suffer'd to conceive and bring forth

forth actual Adultery, how do the Adulterer and his Strumpet shew their hatred one to the other! The mischief they do themselves is inconceivable: and how do they defile each the others Body, wound each the others Conscience, and delight in that whereby they damn each the others Soul!

2. There is a Love which is *Natural*. I mean *Natural affection*. To have this natural affection is a duty, for 'tis planted in the heart by the wise and gracious God, as that which has a mighty tendency to the conservation of Mankind: therefore to be *without natural affection*, the Apostle makes one of the crimes of them who were given up to a *reprobate mind*, to do those things which were *not convenient*, Rom. i. 28, 31. Natural affection we owe unto Relations; which debt if we refuse to pay, we shut our ears to the dictates of Nature, as well as the word of Christ, and become worse than Infidels, nay worse than the beasts that perish. Parents must love their Children, Children their Parents, Husbands and Wives be full of affection to one another. But Grace should *spiritualize* this Natural affection. Not only the persons of our Relations must be loved, but their Souls; and their eternal Salvation most earnestly desired and endeavoured; and if we cannot bear the thoughts of a Parents, Husbands, Wives, or Childs pain, poverty, slavery, starving, the thoughts

of their being eternally damn'd, should be much more intolerable! and all means should be used to prevent it.

3. There is a Love which may be styled *Civil*. This is one of the great bonds of Humane Societies, whereby they are kept together; whereas hatred and discord, do first divide and then destroy them. This *Amor patriæ*, love to our Countrey, the more it prevails, the more will our Countrey flourish. In a Kingdom, the whole should be concerned for every individual; and every individual for the whole, and all the parts for one another. No member should hastily be concluded a gangren'd one; that is

Ense recidendum, ne pars sincera trahatur; Presently to be cut off, lest the whole Community be endanger'd. *Draco* is not lookt upon as one of the wisest Legislators, who made almost every Offence capital, and therefore is said to have writ his *Laws in blood*. A mild Government, such as our *English* is, does best suit with Christianity, and is likeliest to attain the end of Magistracy, the *Highest Sovereigns glory*, the *King and Kingdoms safety*. Love should make all the Subjects of a Kingdom to consider the Relation they have to, and their concern in one another; and no Plots and Conspiracies should be allowed; but onely designs and endeavours of one anothers wealth and welfare; especially the truest wealth, and the welfare that is eternal.

I cannot but here bewail the want of this
Evil love, and the variance that is in my Na-
 tive Country. *New Names* of discrimination are
 invented, which our forefathers knew not.
Breaches grow wide as the Sea; who but the
 God of Love and Peace can heal them? A
perverse Spirit mingles it self among different
 Parties; and differences are kept up, and still
 increased with an unusual animosity. When
Phaeron had set the World on fire, the Poet
 by an elegant *Prosopopœia* brings in the Earth
 it self thus pleading,

*Flasne mihi fructus? hunc fertilis huius honorem;
 Officiique refers? &c.*——

And may not *England*, which at this day is in
 a flame of Contention, be introduced thus speak-
 ing to her Inhabitants?

O *English-men*, what means this more than civil
 Discord and Fury among you? In Me you have
 been born and bred: And considering the tempera-
 ness of the Climate, the fruitfulness of the Soil,
 the variety of Delights; where can you find a bet-
 ter Land, that might reasonably be wisht to have
 been the Land of your Nativity? Be not I be-
 seech you so unnatural, as to fill and load me with
 sin, and to make me desolate, a Land not inha-
 bited. The Corn I bear, the abundance of plea-
 sant Fruit I produce, the Beasts I nourish for your
 food, the wholesome Air you breathe in; for all
 these

these, is would be an unworthy requital to turn me into an Aeldama, a Field of Blood. I have been a Land of Light to you, as well as fruitful: The Sun of Righteousness has shined as clearly and gloriously in Me, as in any Nation under Heaven. Observe not, quarrel me away that which is my truest glory, that which is your greatest Privilege. Study and mind the things which concern your peace: Make your peace with God by faith in his Son, and that faith accompanied with Repentance and Reformation; and be at peace among your selves; and then you need not fear your foreign foes: And I should again become a Land of Renown; and be both feared and courted all Europe over.

4. There is a Love which is Spiritual: The grounds and attractives of this are Spiritual. And this kind of love the Text speaks of: Christians Hearts should be filled with it: And the more this is expressed, the more the Church must needs be edified. The Nature of this Love I shall explain in these Particulars.

1. Love is a Grace wrought by the God of all grace, 1 John 4. 7. Let us love one another; for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. That Spirit which brings a man to the knowledge of God, and regenerates him, and makes him a New Creature, works in him this Grace of Love; therefore we read, That the fruit of the Spirit is love, Gal. 5. 22. Though Good Nature be an

cellent thing, and the dispositions of many incline them to be full of loving-kindness; yet this natural sweetness of temper does greatly differ from Christian Charity. The best Nature is regardless of the soul; neither is it concerned for it self or others, beyond the things of sense, and of this present World. The Apostle thus describes a state of Nature, in which he sometimes was as well as others, *Tit. 3. 3.* *We our selves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.* So that true love to others is of an Heavenly Original.

2. Love is in Obedience to the Divine Command. Christians love one another, because their Lord and Saviour has commanded them, *Joh. 15. 12.* *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you:* Both Law and Gospel insist upon this. The Summ of the second Table of the Law, is this, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self.* And by the Gospel this Law is established. Faith in Christ therefore and Love are joyned, *1 Joh. 3. 23.* *And this is his Commandment, that we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as he gave us Commandment.* Obedience to the Command sanctifies our love to our Neighbour, and renders it not only more profitable to him, but acceptable to God himself. When we love others, that Gods will may be

fulfilled, and he may be pleased, and because of the Image of God and Christ which we see in them; then we love truly: And this is the meaning of that, 1 Job. 5. 2. *By this we know that we love the Children of God, when we love God, and keep his Commandments.* When love to God, and a care to keep his Laws, induce us to love his Children, because he bids us, and for his sake.

3. Love implies a *Mortification of contrary Passions.* The Poet sayes, *Virtus est vitium fugere.* Vertue is, to fly from Vice: So may I say, Love is, to fly from Anger, Wrath, Malice, Bitterness, Envy, Revenge, which are sins of such a nature, that they carry their punishment in their bowels, and make an Hell as well as deserve one. The darkness of the night is chased away when the day returns, and the Sun rises; sickness is removed, when health is restored; and in like manner those sinful and corrupt passions, which benight the Soul, and are the diseases of it, are purged out, where this Grace of Love is indeed infused. The Apostle plainly shews this, Eph. 4. 31. compared with Chap. 5. 2. In the former place he sayes, *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour be put away, with all kind of malice.* In the latter he sayes, *Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and gave himself for us.* Compare also Col. 3. 8. with v. 14. and you may perceive, that we must put off anger, wrath, malice, when we put

plus on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

4. Love implies an *Inclination to Union*. The nature of it is to unite and knit things together. Thus by the love of *Friendship*, the Soul of Jonathan was knit with the Soul of David, 1 Sam. 18. 1. and the Hearts of Christians are knit together by this excellent Grace of Love, Col. 2. 2. Union is of God, and is indeed the Churches strength. The bundle of rods in the Fable, while they remain'd bound together, could not be broken; whereas every single one might be snapt asunder with ease. So far as the Church is divided, so far 'tis certainly and dangerously weakned. There is an admirable Union in the Godhead: Three distinct Persons are in one incomprehensibly glorious Nature. A wonderful Union also in Christ himself; two distinct Natures in one Person and Mediator; and these two Natures infinitely more differing than Earth and Heaven, than the Sun and a Mole-hill; and yet behold them inseparably united. The Churches Union is Mystical; they are Many Members, but love makes them one Body; for it makes them of one heart, and of one Soul. Love alters the contentious and cruel nature, and inclines to Union and Peace. So that, to use the Prophets Phrase, *The Wolf dwells peaceably with the Lamb, the Leopard lies down with the Kid; the Calf and the young Lion and the Fattling together; and a little Child may lead them: the Cow and the Bear feed, their young*

So Love Edifies the Body of Christ.

ones lye down together; and the Lyon eats straw like the Oxe: the sucking Child plays on the hole of the Asse; and the weaned Child puts his hand on the Adders den: so far as love prevails, there is no hurting nor destroying one another in all Gods holy Mountain, Isa. 11. 6, 7, 8, 9. Christ prayed for this Union, as that which would be for the Churches benefit, and for the Worlds Conviction, that he came forth from God. John 17. 21. That they all may be one, as thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in us, that the World may believe that thou hast sent me. How needful is Love to unite Christians, and to make them one; since divisions strike at Christ himself, and harden the World in its infidelity!

5. Love enlarges the Heart, and frees it from the bonds of selfishness; and makes us desire others welfare as well as our own. Love to our Neighbour breaths forth in fervent wishes, that it may be well with him both in Time, and to Eternity. We are in every respect to consider our Brethren; and true love will make us long that every way they may be benefited; that they may not want any needful secular comfort and encouragement; especially that they may be blessed with all Spiritual blessings: And above all that they may attain Eternal Happiness and Salvation. The Apostles love vents it self in a Prayer for the Corinthians temporal prosperity and increase. 2 Cor. 9. 10. Now he that ministereth

interests feed to the Sower, both Minister bread for your food and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your Righteousness. So St. John writing to his beloved Gaius, wishes him health and prosperity, 3 Joh. 2. Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy Soul prospereth. But the Apostle wishes that Souls might be sanctified and saved, were most vehement, and most pathetically expressed, Rom. 10. 1. Brethren my heart desire and prayer to God for Israel, is that they might be saved. Phil. 1. 8. God is my record how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. Gal. 4. 19. My little Children of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you. Behold how the Apostle loved Souls! I don't wonder that he wishes his love as a blessing to the Church; 1 Cor. 16. 24. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

6. Love is the fulfilling of the Law, the doing of which is so much for our Neighbours benefit, Rom. 13. 8. He that loveth another, hath fulfilled the Law. As love to God includeth the whole first table of the Law, so love to our Neighbour includes the second: with reason 'tis called *amor proximi*, the fulfilling of the Law, for it causes an affectionate and obediential respect unto every Commandment of the second table, and there is not one of these precepts but 'tis hugely for the good of Mankind.

1. Love has a regard to the Honour and Au-

honour of Others. That honour which is due to Natural Parents, love is ready to yield. They that were instrumental in giving us our very Being, and that nourished us with such tenderness and care when we were not able to shift for our selves, may rightfully challenge obedience from us. Upon a supposition that Parents are fallen into decay, that piety that Children shew them in relieving them is called a *Requiring* them, *1 Tim. 5. 4.* so that Childrens disobedience as 'tis unnatural, so it has a great deal of ingratitude in it.

Love ascends higher than our Natural Parents, and reaches the very Thrones where Kings and Princes are placed. Kings are *Patria Patres*, Fathers of their Countrey; all the inhabitants of a Kingdom are the Children of the King, and as a Common Father their very hearts should love and reverence him. It was not a Court complement, or a strain of Rhetorick, but an expression of religious Loyalty, when the Prophet call'd *the Anointed of the Lord* the *breast of the peoples nostrils*, *Lam. 4. 20.* and signifies how dear his life should be unto them all. Love will cause tribute and custom to be willingly paid, fear and honour to be rendred, *Rom. 13. 7.*

Christian Princes, according as it was prophetically promised, *Isa. 49. 23.* are *Ecclesia Nutriti*, the Churches *Nursing Fathers*. The Church

Church of Christ in this world is not arrived to such *maturity*, but it stands in need of *rising*; the Magistrates care is needful, and his Authority is a good fence unto the Christian faith. And if the Doctrine of the Gospel has a legal establishment, how should this endear the Supream Magistrate unto all inferiours. Where Christian love reigns in the hearts of Subjects, there Christian Kings will reign with greater security. Love and rightly informed Conscience wherever found, will do more than Rods and Axes (though these are also necessary) to support and defend the Civil Government.

2. Love has a regard to the *Lives of Others*. The guilt of blood is great, the cry of blood is loud. Murder! how does it wound the Murderers Conscience, and defile the very land which receives the blood of him that is murdered! Love utterly abhors cruelty and slaughter. It considers the meekness and gentleness of Christ. When James and John would by miraculous fire have consumed a Samaritan village that would not receive their Lord, He rebukes them, and sayes *ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of; for the Son of man is not come to destroy mens lives but to save them*, Luk. 9. 55, 56. Love is so far from thirsting after blood, that it will not allow of malice in the heart; nay, rash and causeless anger it dislikes, for that will make *men in danger of*

the

the judgment, Mat. 5. 22. Were but love every where revived, it would put an end to the Iron one, and cause the Golden age to return, Swords would be beaten into Plough-shares, and Spears into Pruning-Hooks, and Nations would not learn War any more.

3. Love will not violate others chastity. Lust is strongly inclined to such a violation; but the grace of love is of an holy and clean nature, and abhors all obscenity. It is so far from consenting to defile anothers body, that it will not allow the heart where 'tis, by a filthy thought or desire to be defiled: for our Lord sayes, *Whosoever looketh on a Woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart*, Mat. 5. 28. Love looks upon the bodies of Christians as *Members of Christ*, as *temples of the Spirit*; now the Members of Christ are not to be polluted, the temples of the Spirit are not to be profaned. How little of true love is there in this lustful Age, in this adulterous generation! An affection that is indeed Christian, is rarely to be found; but a reprobate and brutish concupiscence is very rife both in City and Countrey, though hereby both are ripening apace for vengeance, Jer. 5. 7, 8, 9. *They assembled themselves by troops in the harlots houses, they were as fed Horses in the morning, every one neighed after his Neighbours Wife, Shall I not visit for those things, saith the Lord, and shall not my foot be avenged on such a nation as this?*

4. Love will not steal away the substance of another. It abhors to be injurious to any; it is for following that which is altogether just. It is ready to distribute, willing to communicate to the poor; according to that charge, 1 Tim. 6. 18. and the poorer any are, it is so much the more communicative. Love is liberal, for he that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly, he which soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully, 2 Cor. 9. 6. But though it will give away pounds to them that are needy, it dares not unjustly take away a penny or a farthing from another though never so wealthy. Solomon tells us that a false balance is not good, and divers weights are an abomination to the Lord, Prov. 20. 23. and they are also an abomination unto Love. No duty more clearly discovered by the light of nature, than to do justly; and what does God in his written word more expressly require? the unrighteous being plainly threaten'd with the loss of the Kingdom of Heaven; and what poor and petty things are their unjust gains compared with such a Kingdom! Wronging another, though it be in so sly a manner, that humane eyes observe it not, humane laws cannot punish it; yet will be overtaken with divine Vengeance; 1 Thes. 4. 6. That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter; because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. Love to our Neighbour implies a Love of Justice, which

is to give our Neighbour his due. Love can soon cease to be Love, as begin to be Injurious. Nay, if a man has heretofore been guilty of Injustice, it will incline and constrain him to make restitution; for, *The wicked must restore the Pledge, and give again what he hath robbed, and walk in the Statutes of Life; then he shall live, he shall not dye, Ezek. 33. 15.*

5. Love is very tender of others Names and Reputation. It detests all manner of Lying, and that which is an abomination to God, Prov. 6. 17. and exposes the Liar himself to the burning lake: Rev. 21. 8. But a slanderous or malicious lye, that wounds the Name, and murders the Reputation of another, it hates exceedingly; for this is an abomination most abominable, and more against the very letter of the Law, *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy Neighbour.* The Name of a man ought to be very dear to him, especially if he be a Christian; because God, and Christ, and the Gospel are concerned in it: A Christian cannot be aspersed without some aspersion on Christianity it self. Love is very wary, and that with great reason, and will not cast into the precious Ointment a dead Fly, to make it send forth an evil savour. Love hinders the Tongue from evil speaking, and makes it subject to the Law of kindness. Love is so far from raising a false report of another, that it dares not take it up, much less spread it all abroad. The Citizen of Sion who shall

shall dwell with God both here and for ever, this is part of his Character; *He speaketh the truth in his heart, he back-biteth not with his tongue, nor doth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor, Psal. 15. 2, 3.*

Light may as well become darkness, as Love be guilty of Lying and malicious Defamations. Professors ears are ready to tingle when they hear the sound of hellish Oaths, and horrid Execrations, wretched men making bold with the Life of God, the blood and wounds of Christ, and hardly a sentence is pronounced without an Imprecation that God may damn them: But these Professors would do well to consider, that the same Mouth of Truth which has forbid and threatned Cursing and Swearing, has forbid and threatned Lying and Slandering; and if we observe how much injury may be done by a slanderous tongue, we shall not wonder that the throats of such Slanderers are compared to open Sepulchers, and their Tongues to whetted Swords and sharpened Arrows, and the Payson of Asps is said to be under them.

6. Love is contented with its own, and binders us from coveting what belongs to another. Sinful lustings and desires after that which is our neighbours, precipitate unto those acts whereby he is injured; thus Abahs inordinate desire after Naboths Vineyard, makes him a Murderer of Naboth, and that with many aggravations, that he might enjoy it. Love breeds content-

contentation, and instead of coveting what is anothers, it wishes him both a quiet possession, and an holy improvement ; and Love expelling these inordinate lustings, it plucks up the very root of bitterness from whence do commonly grow all those injuries that the Sons of men do one to another. Thus Love is Eagle-eyed to observe whatever God in his Law has commanded for our neighbours good, and since the wise and gracious Law-giver has manifested his care of our neighbour, in fencing his Life and all that is dear to him with so many Commandments, Love rationally infers, it ought to be our care not to break this fence, but to keep all these Commandments without exception.

7. *Love breeds Sympathy when our fellow Christians are in misery*: It makes us fear least harm befall the Church of God, and when the Church is actually under Affliction, it causes us in that affliction to be afflicted. Love is the great Law of Christ, and Christian Sympathy is a fulfilling it, *Gal. 6. 2. Bear ye one anothers burthens, and so fulfill the Law of Christ.* The Captive Jews their Harps were out of Tune, and their Hearts had little list to Mirth and Musick ; nay, *By the rivers of Babylon they wept when they remembered Zion, Psal. 137. 1, 2.* Love easily melts the heart of a Saint into sorrow, when other Saints are in sadness and calamity ; nay, is ready to put on bowels when it sees any in misery.

misery. This Sympathy of Love is a real thing, and shews it self in a forwardness to relieve and help. Love enlarges the Heart in Prayer for the distressed Church of Christ, and all his Members; it makes us in the Churches languors ready to faint and dye away our selves; Love draws forth our Compassion towards the divided and distressed Land of our Nativity: and in some it arises to so high a degree, that they are ready (such are their holy Agonies) to wish *Their Names blotted out of the Book of Life*, and themselves *accursed from Christ*, rather than *England should become desolate*, rather than *God should depart*, and the glorious Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ be removed!

8. Love makes us to *delight in the Communion of Saints*. Sin has brought a great deformity and unloveliness upon Mankind; the Scripture speaks thus of Men, considered in their natural State, *They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy, there is none that doeth good, no nor one*, Psal. 14. 3. But the Grace of God has made a difference between the Saints and other men, they have put off the old man which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts, and they put on the new man which after God is created in Righteousness and true Holiness, Eph. 4. 22. 24. Now this Holiness makes them truly amiable. Love makes us pity the World that lies in wickedness, but to *delight in those who by Regeneration are called out of the World*, and

and made New Creatures. *David*, though a King, lookt upon Saints as the excellent ones, and his delight was all in them, as the most eligible and suitable Society, *Psal. 16. 3.* Love is exceedingly pleased with the holy and unblameable and exemplary Lives of others, it finds a Melody and Sweetness in their gracious and edifying Discourses, when their Hearts are warm, and their Graces are in vigorous exercise; the delight is greatest when Saints are most like themselves, discovering most of real Sanctity, and least of sinful Infirmary. Love is for Communion with all Saints, though of different persuasions: He that likes Saints of his own Judgment only, 'tis a sign he is fond of his own Opinion, and that his Complacency is not so truly in the Image of God, wherever it shines: 'Tis want of light that makes Saints of different sentiments in Religion, and 'tis want of Love that makes them so shy, to look so strangely, to speak so strangely, and to act so strangely one towards another.

9. Love causes a joy in the good of others. In the natural Body if one Member be honoured, all the Members rejoyce with it, *1 Cor. 12. 26.* Christians in like manner are so rejoyced with them that do rejoyce, *Rom. 12. 15.* It was an excellent Spirit in *John the Baptist*, and it argued the Truth of his Love to the *Messiah*, of whom he was the forerunner, that he rejoyced to see *Christ* increase, though he himself decreased, *Joh. 3. 29, 30.*

The

The Apostle was perswaded of the *Corinthians* affection to him, when he said, *I have confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all.* 2 Cor. 12: 3. The more Love abounds, the more the joy of one Christian will be the joy of every one. Love rejoices to see the Spirit of God poured out in the most plentiful manner, to see useful and excellent gifts distributed to others. It is really glad of their highest attainments, their enlargements, their comforts, their honour and esteem following upon all this. We are all Members one of another; and why should we not rejoyce in one anothers honour, since we are really honoured one in another; and the honour of all redounds at length to our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Head of all.

Love covers a multitude of sins and Infirmitie, 1 Pet. 4. 8. Not that there is any merit in this Grace of Charity, to deserve the pardon of sin in our selves; but instead of spreading the faults of others, it spreads a veil over them. Love makes us tender-hearted and kind, ready to forgive others, as we our selves for Christs sake have been forgiven. And indeed the offences and injuries done to us by others are but like the debt of a few pence, compared with our offences against God, which amount to many Millions of Talents. The Apostle Peter mist Christ, Lord, how often shall my Brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

Jesus saith unto him, I say unto thee, not till seven times, but untill seventy times seven, Mat. 18. 21, 22. Some think that there is allusion to the custom of the Jews, to shew favour every seventh year, but especially in the year of Jubilee. As there is a greater measure of light in the Christian Church than there was in the Jewish, so ought there to be a greater measure of love. We must not only forgive to seven times, or seven times seven, but *seventy times seven*; a certain number for an uncertain; intimating we must pardon our trespassing Brother without any stay or limitation. Our Lord calls the time of the Gospel *invalley dextera*, the *acceptable year*, Luk. 4. 19. Christians should abhor all manner of revenge, and be as charitably inclined to pass by their Brethrens faults, as if their life were a perpetual Jubilee.

Where is the love of those, who not only harbour in their hearts a grudge against their Brethren, but their mouths are like Trumpets to sound forth their failings. Nay, they tarry not to examine whether failings or no; but boldly and blindly conclude them to be such, and proclaim and exclaim against them: Nay, their eager tongues tarry not for a certain information; but whether reports to the disparagement of others be true or false, they make them run like wild-fire. What's become of Love the mean while? Love hies a *multitude* of sins, but these persons won't conceal one.

Love

Love covers real Crimes, but these forbear not spreading false reports. The Tongue by *Drexelius* is called *Orbis Phaethon*, the *Phaethon* of the World, that sets it in a flame. If as the Apostle sayes, an unruly tongue defiles the whole body, and he that seems religious, and bridles not his tongue, does but deceive his own heart, and his Religion is in vain, *Jam. 1. 25.* Let a multitude of Professors at this day, tremble, and be astonished, and cry out, *Who among us shall be saved?*

11. Love is projecting and designing the good of others. Thus the Apostle abased himself that others might be exalted; and sought not his own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved, *1 Cor. 10. 33.* Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; but is very fruitful in contriving, and operative in promoting his Neighbours welfare. Love is not in word and in tongue only, but in deed and in truth, *1 Joh. 3. 18.* It will not only say, depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; but 'tis ready to cloath the naked, and to feed the hungry: nay, it deviseth liberal and charitable things; and considers the wants of Souls, as well as Bodies, cordially, according to its capacity; endeavouring that both may be supplied. The Apostles love to the *Corinthians* was very active, notwithstanding a woeful falling on their side. *2 Cor. 12. 14, 15.* I seek not yours, but you; and I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; (in the Greek, 'tis

more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved. Thus have I explained the Nature of Love.

In the Second place I am to speak of the Properties which the Scripture attributes to it, and requires should be in Love.

1. Love must proceed from a pure heart, 1 Tim. 1. 5. A heart must of necessity be made a new one, before this Grace of Love can dwell there. If Satan cannot make us hate our Brother, he will endeavour to defile our Love. There is need of the greater care, that our Love be not defiled by selfishness, or lust and filthiness. Our affections should be pure and clean; as Angels may be conceived to love one another. All impure motions must be detested utterly; and our hearts being first circumcised to love a God of Holiness, must love Saints for their holiness sake. Our love should alwayes have an holy aim, and never degenerate, so as to design the polluting of others, or our selves with them.

2. Love must be joyn'd with a good Conscience, 1 Tim. 1. 5. A Christian should not be conscious to himself of any sinful or by-ends that he has in his love to others. He must not have persons in admiration because of advantage; nor allow of any Hypocrisy, which Conscience cannot chuse, if tender, but condemn. Therefore sayes the Apostle, Let love

be without dissimulation, Rom. 12. 9. Conscience observes whether our inward affection answers our speeches, our shews, and our pretences; and should be able to bear witness of our integrity. Our love to our neighbours should be for Christs sake, and should make us to pursue the ends for which Christ died on their account.

3. Love must flow from faith unfeigned. In that fore-cited place, 1 Tim. 1. 5. Now the end of the Commandment is Charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned. There must be a firm belief of Gods good-will towards men, of Christs love to his Church, so as to give himself for its Redemption and Salvation, and that he much insists upon this Command, that Christians should love one another; and when love is the product of this belief, then 'tis right, then 'tis acceptable. The Apostle gave thanks without ceasing in the behalf of the Ephesians, when he heard of their faith in the Lord Jesus, and love to all the Saints, Eph. 1. 15, 16. How can he refuse to love any one Saint, who unfeignedly believes that Christ died for all; especially if withall he be upon good grounds perswaded, that Christ loved him, and gave himself for him.

4. Love must be fervent, 1 Pet. 1. 22. Seeing ye have purified your Souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto the unfeigned love of the Brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart,

heart fervently. 'Tis ill with the Body if the natural heat abates; it argues a dangerous decay in the new Creature, if Love wax cold. If Christians Love one towards another languish, proportionably there will be also a languishing of their love to Christ himself; and this is very perillous. When there was not a fervency, but lukewarmness in Laodicea, Christ threatens to spue her out of his mouth, Rev. 3. 16. When Ephesus had left her first love, he sayes, I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy Candlestick out of his place, except thou repent, Rev. 2. 4, 5. The great love of God in Christ, his frequent injunctions that love may continue, the excellency, sweetness, usefulness, and even absolute necessity of love for the Churches conservation; all this should be as perpetual fuel to maintain this holy fire.

5. Christians Love must be *Brotherly*. Christ sayes to his Disciples, *All ye are Brethren*, Mat. 23. 8. The whole Body of Believers is called *a Synagogue*, the *Brotherhood*, 1 Pet. 2. 17. Christians are all Children of the same heavenly Father, who by one Spirit, according to his abundant mercy has begotten them again to a lively hope; all of them have Christ to be their Elder Brother, and are born again of the same seed which is incorruptible; how reasonable then are those injunctions, *Love as Brethren*, 1 Pet. 3. 8. And let *Brotherly love continue*, Heb. 13. 1. Alas for woe! that the sinful Defects and Pas-

sions

sions of Brethren are to be found among Professors, but not the Affection. Multitudes at this day resemble the Brother, spoken of by Solomon, Prov. 18. 19. *A Brother offended is harder to be won than a strong City, and their Contentions are like the bars of a Castle.*

6. Love should be extended so as to become Catholic; and the more extensive 'tis, the more it makes a Man resemble God himself.

7. Love is to be extended to the whole Church, to all Saints. When Love is limited to a party, 'tis Imprisoned as it were, which ought to enjoy the greatest Liberty. 'Tis common and needful to distinguish between *Conversion to a party*, and *Conversion to God*. There is a distinction likewise to be made between *Love to a party*, and *Love to the Church of God*. 'Tis but too apparent that men place too much in being of such a party and Perswasion, and therefore all *Receding*, though done with a clear Conscience, and for the Churches Peace, is nick-named *Apostacy*. And though a man walks as closely with God, lives as well as ever, loves more Saints, and Saints more than ever, yet because he is not *rigidly of such a way*, he is censur'd, belyed, reproacht and shunn'd, as if he were an *Heathen man or Publican*. Oh Love! why sleepest thou? awake, awake! wherever thou art planted, revive and flourish, and bring forth the fruits of kindness, peaceableness, tenderness and moderation! All true Saints of all

Perfwasions, are beloved of God, and purchased with his blood, and nothing shall be able to separate them from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus their Lord, Rom. 8. *utr.* Disaffections therefore and distances one from another, are very unseemly, very sinful. Though God does love all his Children freely, yet they are all worthy of one anothers love, and this love is a just Debt which they owe one to another. If Saints are loved as Saints, all Saints will be loved, *quatenus ad omne valet consequentia*. And if we love not all, 'tis but too plain that we love none at all truly.

2. Love is to be extended to the Jews, if they are beloved for their Fathers sakes, Rom. 11. 28. Christians should love them, and express that love by Prayer, that they may not still abide in their Unbelief, but look unto Jesus whom they have pierced, and obtain Mercy.

3. Love is to reach unto the *uncalled Gentiles*. The worlds blindness and wickedness should move our Compassion; and since the Mercy of our God is so unconceivably large, we should desire that more may partake of it, and since Christ is a Propitiation sufficient for the sins of the whole World, 1 Joh. 2. 22. We should pity the millions of Souls that never heard of him, and beg that the sound of the Gospel may come to their ears, and that through this Jesus they may be reconciled and saved.

4. Love is to be extended even to enemies and

Perse-

Persecutors. Christians must not render evil for evil, reproach for reproach, cursing for cursing; but if they are reviled, they are to bless; if they are defamed, they are to increase; and they must endeavour the Worlds benefit, though they are made the filth of the World, and the off-scouring of all things, 1 Cor. 4. 12, 13. A Saints Patience should alwayes be greater than the Passion of a Persecutor, a Saints love than a Persecutors hatred. 'Tis an excellent Spirit, and the right Spirit of Christian charity, to be meek and kind to those that are most bitter against us; to speak the best of those, who speak the worst of us; to Pray that our most spiteful Enemies may be forgiven; and that the injuries which are done us, being Pardon'd, may not do an eternal harm unto the Injurers.

7. Love should never fail, but more and more increase. It must be a constant fire never to be extinguished, nay, it should become stronger and purer continually, Phil. 1. 9. *And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in Knowledge and in all Judgement.* The true reasons of Love must be better and better understood, and the expressions of Love must be still with more and more judgment and discretion, that the end aimed at may be attained. After the Apostle had acknowledged the *Thessalonians* taught of God to love one another; yet adds, *We beseech you Brethren, that you increase more and more,*

more, 1 Thes. 4. 9. 10. And if where Love did so much abound, there was reason to press an increase, Oh, how much need is there in such an angry and contentious Age as this, to blow up this fire which is so near to going out. I have done with the *Properties of Love*.

In the third place I am to demonstrate how *Love is for the Churches Edification*. 'Tis for the Edification of *Him* that loves, and for the Edification of *those* whom he loves. A Christian *Edifies* both *himself* and *others* by Love. *First*, I shall demonstrate that he Edifies *himself*.

1. The more he Loves, there is the *greater light* in him. The understanding is darken'd by those sins which are contrary to Love, as Prejudice, Passion, Envy, Hatred, so that what is Truth, is not easily discerned; what is Duty, is not readily apprehended in many cases. The fore-mention'd evil Affections do bias the Judgment wrong. Though the eye be good, and the object not far off, yet the eye cannot so plainly see the object, if there be a mist between them: Anger and Malice raise such a mist before the eye of the Judgment, that 'tis very prone to be mistaken; but this mist is scattered by Love, so that a Christian sees his way plain, and is less subject to stumble; 1 Joh. 2. 9, 10, 11. *He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his Brother, is in darkness even until now; He that loveth his Brother abideth*

in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him; but he that hateth his Brother, is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

2. The more a Christian Loves, there is the more of Gods Image in him; he is the more transformed into the Divine Nature, 1 Joh. 4. 7, 8. God is Love, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. In Scripture God is said to delight in Mercy, to rest in his love, to be good to all, to be kind to the unthankful and evil. How does Love Edifie a Child of God, making him resemble his Heavenly Father in these excellent perfections; and how unlike to Satan does love make us! Have we Knowledge? how great an understanding has the evil one! have we Faith? The Devils also believe and tremble; but if we have Love, Satan has nothing of this in him, he hates and tortures his own self, he hates Gods Children, and all his own Children; he would destroy the former, he will, unless they cease to be his Children, destroy the latter.

3. The more a Christian loves, he has the firmer evidence that he is indeed a Christian. The Apostle tells us, that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace. The more love, the more peace and joy, Gal. 5. 22. We read Phil. 2. 1, 2. of Consolation in Christ and Comfort in love. Love builds us up in solid Comfort; for we have the mark of Christs Sheep upon us, if we love the

the whole flock. That Religion has not true
 X that has not love in it: pretences to light and
 purity, without love, are all vain. But he that
 is full of love, in this world; shall not be sent
 to Hell in the other World, where there is
 no love at all, 1 Joh. 3. 14. *We know that we
 have passed from death to life, because we love the
 Brethren.*

Secondly, I shall demonstrate that Christians
 edifie not only themselves but others by their
 love, and that 'tis exceedingly for the Church-
 es Edification.

1. Love makes us concerned for the whole
 Church of Christ, and enlarged in our supplications
 and intercessions for it. This publick Spirit
 which is the effect of Catholick love, is very
 pleasing unto God, and mightily prevails with
 him. God encourages us to an importunity
 for Zion. He does not say as he did to Mo-
 ses, *Let me alone that I may destroy*: but gives
 me no rest until I save, Isa. 62. 6, 7. *I have set
 watchmen upon thy Walls, O Jerusalem, which shall
 never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make
 mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give
 him no rest till he establish, and make Jerusalem a
 praise in the earth.* Love takes this encouragement,
 and makes the Christian thus to resolve: *For Zi-
 ons sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalems
 sake I will not rest, until the Righteousness thereof
 goes forth as brightness, and the Salvation thereof as*

a lamp that burneth. The Churches Reformation and Righteousness is to be prayed for, as well as it's Deliverance and Salvation. The Apostle tells us, if we will pray to purpose, we must lift up holy hands without wrath and doubting, 1 Tim. 2. 8. Wrath defiles him that prays, and fills the censers with strange fire, mixing a sinful fervency and heat with prayer; and so hinders its prevalency and acceptation. But Love empties the heart of wrath, and fills it with an holy fervour; and how much does the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man prevail! Jam. 5. 16. One Moses full of love to Israel, and to the God of Israel, zealous for Gods Honour, desirous of Israels welfare; he stands in the gap, and by prayer turns away that Wrath that was breaking in and ready to destroy all the people, Psal. 108. 23. Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood in the breach before him, to turn away his wrath lest he should destroy them.

2. Love strongly inclines us unto peaceableness, and what is for the Churches peace is for her edification, Rom. 14. 19. Let us follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edifie another. I grant when we are pursuing peace, we must have a special regard to truth and holiness, Zach. 8. 19. Love the truth and peace, Heb. 12. 14. Follow after Peace with all Men, and Holiness. But the Scripture must

must determine what is Truth, and we must distinguish between the great Truths of the Gospel and those that are less important. It was a truth which the Apostle was *perswaded of by the Lord Jesus Christ*, that there was *no man unclean of it self*; and yet those who were otherwise perswaded, he look'd upon as tolerable, and not to be *despised*: Nay, he expressly forbids those of different Sentiments, in this matter to *judge one another*, Rom. 14. The Scripture likewise must inform us wherein purity and holiness lies; for a mistake here may quickly draw forth such a furious zeal, as may set the Church in a flame. Some place Purity and all Religion in being *for the Liturgy established*, as if the Compilers of it had been *tantum non* divinely inspired, and all other Prayer were but meer Enthusiasm and contemptible babbling. On the other hand, some place purity and all Religion in declaiming against the Liturgy, as *Mass-english*, the *mark of the Beast*, and the *very voice of the Whore of Babylon*. But neither the one nor the other place purity and Religion right. The Scripture no where commands that we should only pray by a form, neither does it forbid a form to be used. But it requires that our very Hearts and Sou's should be in our prayers, and faith and holy desires and other graces exercised in our duties; and *here* lies the purity of them. Love therefore refuses to be *quarrelsome* about smaller matters:

for

for it knows that peaceableness cements the Church, and closes her breaches; and it justly fears lest while men are so contentious about ceremonies, the substance of Religion be lost in the quarrel.

3. Love makes Christians condescending and yielding one to another, that hereby edification may be promoted. To be Magisterial and self-willed is not to be the Servants of Christ, who are employed in building of his Church. We are not to be Dictators; but all alike to hearken to the voice and command of Christ our Lord, and to be mild and gentle one towards another. The Apostle Peter charges the Younger to submit themselves to the Elder, but withal adds, yea all of you be subject one to another, 1 Pet. 5. 5. and hereby intimates, that to be Lordly and imposing is contrary to the Spirit of Christianity. It was love that made the Apostle Paul a Servant to all, that he might gain the more, 1 Cor. 9. 19. To the Jews he became as a Jew, that he might gain the Jews; to the weak he became as weak that he might gain the weak; he did not hereby manifest a carnal compli-
 ciance through fear, but a condescension of love. He was not to be charged with Levity or Apostacy, he was not to be censured as a Turn-coat, as an Hypocrite, as a Mungrel minister, or a Linsey Wolsley Brother, nor to be called Dough-baked, a Cake not turned. No, no, the Apostle loved the Gospel, and had a mind to spread it,

It, he loved Souls and was desirous to save them, and understood how far he might yield in indifferent things for the Churches peace and edification. Love makes us patient and self-denying, hinders us from pursuing petty designs, or private revenges; The pleasing of God and profiting his Church, swallow up such things as these. Love will hinder us from *envying high things*, and move us to *condescend to men of low estate*, Rom. 12. 16. Indeed to apply our selves to all the best and most probable ways for their benefit; we shall endeavour to *help the weak*, we shall *pity the fallen*, we shall labour to *reduce the straying*, we shall *encourage the diligent*, and honour the stronger Saints, and all this is hugely for Edification.

Love makes Christians highly to esteem the Pastours and Builders of the Church for their work sake, and hereby Edification is promoted. The Ministry of the Gospel is a special gift which Christ bestowed upon his Church, for her unconceivable advantage; Eph. 4. 8, 11, 12, 13. *Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. And he gave some Prophets, and some Apostles, and some Evangelists, and some Pastours and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the Faith and of the Knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man. And since the Ministry is such a gift and token*

token of the Royal bounty of Christ who is attended far above all Heavens, certainly the flock of Christ are to love and encourage their Pastours; and the more they do this, the more likely 'tis, that the end of the Ministry's institution should be attained, namely the edifying and perfecting of the Church of Christ. The Apostle, though he might have commanded yet uses intreaties for Ministers sake, *1 Thes.* 5. 12, 13. He had bid them just before, v. 11, to *edifie one another*, but knowing the work of Edification would go on, but lamely without a Gospel-ministry, he therefore adds, *And we beseech you Brethren to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their works sake, and to have peace among your selves.*

6. Love will constrain the Pastours and builders of the Church to mind their work to purpose. A Minister that is full of love to Christ and Souls, cannot be a Lofterer. If indeed he does design preferment, and to fill his baggs with wealth be his great aim, then he will grudge Souls his pains: He will not be concerned though Hell fill never so fast, and though himself be going apace thither. But if holy love to the Church of Christ does rule in his heart, it will constrain him to be a Labourer, and to do his work diligently; he will watch and pray, he will search and study, and above

all books the Bible: He will take heed to himself, and to all his flock, that he may save himself and them that hear him. Nay love will make a Minister labour, and suffer also for the Churches Edification. Abundant love to the *Corinthians* made the Apostle say, *I will very gladly spend and be spent for you*, 2 Cor. 12, 15. And 'tis very plain that he did not think much of suffering, *Phil. 2. 17. Yea, and if I be offered upon the Sacrifice and Service of your faith, I joy and rejoyce with you all.* These reasons plainly demonstrate how much Love tends to edifie.

But a great many reasons more I find all together; even a whole cluster of them, 1 Cor. 13. 4, 5, 6, 7. which I shall enlarge upon, because they are both a trial of our love, and a demonstration most evident that love is for Edification. The Apostles words are very searching, very piercing; he reads a kind of Anatomy Lecture upon this grace of Love and Charity; and lays the inside of it open to the view of others: He seems to speak a strange word, *Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing*, v. 31. What is Charity and Love, may some say, if feeding the poor be not? These outward acts a Pharisee may do meerly out of ostentation, *Mat. 6.* a Papist may do, ignorantly hoping thereby to satisfy for his sins, and merit Heaven

ven: I grant that love without these outward
acts of mercy, is vain and useless. *Love in
itself is dead.* Love in itself, is love in
truth, 1 Joh. 3. 18. But though love produce
such deeds, many outward acts of mercy may
be where love is not. The Apostle in a great
many particulars discovers true love and Cha-
rity, and I shall make it evident how in eve-
ry particular 'tis much for edification.

1. Love *suffers long, and is kind.* God is
longsuffering, and so is Love. It enables us
to rule our own spirits, which argues true
greatness and strength of Soul. *Prov. 16. 32.*
He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty,
and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh
a City. Love is so far from revenging
injuries already done, that it will bear new
ones: and that's the meaning of our Lords
Injunction, *Mat. 5. 39. I say unto you, that ye*
resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on the
right cheek, turn to him the other also. Nay,
Love though it suffers long, is *kind* notwith-
standing. 'Tis much to put up an injury, but
much more to be kind to the Injurer. This
love in Churches, how would it unite them?
and the more they are united, the more they
are strengthened. *Provocations to wrath* would
be turned into *provocations to love*; and evil
would be overcome by goodness; and the
World hereby is likely to be convinced and
converted. The Proto-Martyr Stephen was kind

to those that stoned him: How does he pray that their *sin* might not be laid to their charge, but that their Souls might be saved, though they thirsted after his blood, and took away his life from him! This Prayer was heard, and Saul at length is converted, and proves a *Master-builder* of the Church of God.

2. Love *envies not*: It is not grieved and troubled at anothers excellency: neither does it grudge at the comfort or prosperity of another. How much of *Hell* is there in the temper of an envious man! The happiness of another is *his* misery, the good of another is his affliction: He looks upon the vertue of another with an evil eye, and is as sorry at the praise of another, as if that praise were taken away from himself. Envy makes him an hater of his Neighbour, and his own Tormenter. Love flies from Envy as extremely diabolical; for the root of it is pride, and ill will is its Concomitant. What sad work has Envy made in Churches! (not to speak of the mischief it has done all the World over.) When Christians have been delirious of *vain-glory*, provoking one another, envying one another, which the Apostle so much dehorts from, *Gal. 5. 26.* When Pastors have been envious at one anothers Parts, Gifts, Preferments, Success and Estimation, the poor Church has suffered, and its Edification has gone on like *Pauls* work, but very slowly. Envy makes the build-

us to fall out, to weaken one anothers hands, to hinder one another in the work of God. Where enoying and strife is, is there Edification? No such matter, but there is confusion, and evil work, Jam. 3. 16. Love instead of being troubled at the grace, or usefulness, or esteem of another, rejoyces therein; and the more there are that honour God, and adorn the Gospel, and benefit the Church, it rejoyces the more.

3. Love *vaunteth not it self, neither is it puffed up.* The word which the Holy Ghost uses for vaunting, is *inphewen*, a Greek word of a Latine derivation, coming from *perperan*, which signifies *amiss*. An ancient Greek Father, St. Basil, propounds this question, What is *inphewen*? and returns this answer, *inphewen* is *inphewen*. Love is against doing things for shew and ostentation, and excludes vain-glorious boasting. *Passing up* relates to the *Heart*, *vaunting* to the words and *actions*. Love refuses to do either. It makes a man not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think soberly, Rom. 12. 3. those Precepts are much minded, Rom. 12. 10. Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another. and Phil. 2. 3. Let each esteem other better than themselves. And as Love hinders the heart from being puffed up, so the tongue from vaunting it self, or debasing another: It will not defame or dispa-

rage others, as if its own reputation were to be built upon the ruine of theirs. Now the kind of temper is very subservient to the Churches interest. For while Christians are thus low in their own eyes, and are ready both in word and deed to honour and encourage one another, great grace, a shining lustre is upon them all; and God himself delights in them to make them flourish and encrease.

4. Love does not behave it self unseemly. What more unseemly than a lofty look, than an haughty carriage! as if others were not good enough to unloose the latchet of our shoes? but Love does banish pride and scornfulness, and makes us humble in our converse, which is the most seemly behaviour in the world. The Greek word *anemoriai*, signifies any unseemly behaviour. So that Love studies exactness of carriage, that Religion may be the more commended unto all. When Professors do that which is unseemly, the Church and Religion suffer by it; but a conversation without rebuke, which manifests a love both to God and Man, is the way to win many a man to God, that before was estranged from him. An unseemly behaviour opens many a mouth against the Gospel, creates new prejudices, and confirms the World in their natural enmity against it. But a seemly conversation makes Religion amiable; well-doing puts ill tongues to silence, and forces them to give glory to God.

God. 1 Pet. 2. 12. Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Love seeketh not her own, and consequently inclines us to edify and to seek the good of others. The Apostles meaning is not, that Love causes us to cast off all care and regard of our selves, but only that which is immoderate, and which proceeding from a blind self-love, makes us disregard what becomes of others. Christ himself is a pattern to Love in this respect, and Love follows him: He was humbled, that we might be exalted; He was condemned, that we might be justified; He became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich; He was made a curse, that we might receive the blessing, even life for evermore.

Love will make a Christian seek the wealth of another, the reputation, and especially the Salvation of another. Nay, Charity will prevail with us to suffer reproach, loss, imprisonment, nay death it self, when God calls us to it for the Churches good. 1 Job.

Ag. 10. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he layed down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. And Col. 1. 24. Who now rejoyce in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his bodies sake which is the Church.

Hence 'tis apparent, sayes Calvin, *Quam non ingemita nobis a natura charitas*; that true Charity is not in us by nature, but a grace from above, really of divine original.

6. Love is not easily provoked. Before it was said, *it suffers long*; but here something further is intimated, *charitatem etiam in gravissimis causis non facile iram effundere*; that though the cause and occasion be very great, yet love is not ready to be incensed. I grant, that notwithstanding love, a Christian may be angry at Sin; but love makes him flye from causeless sinful anger. The Scripture prohibitions are very strict and severe, *Eccles. 7. 9. Be not hasty in thy Spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools. Psal. 37. 8. Cease from anger and forsake wrath; fret not thy self in any wise to do evil.* Anger and wrath, what harm has it done in the Christian World! what rents, what divisions has it made! bitter fruit has grown from this root of bitterness. *The wrath of man worketh not the Righteousness of God*, nor his Churches good: and therefore Love, which moderates anger, and mortifies what is sinful and hurtful in it, must needs do the Church kindness. Alas! poor England! and compassionate Church in it! how many parties are there, and how high their exasperations! but their fury one against another is a perfect frenzy; which has a certain and speedy tendency unto an universal destruction. *When of love is one*

one of the clearest demonstrations that there is
more of Wisdom.

Love *thinketh no evil*; it is not apt to impute evil to another; but to construe the words and actions of others in the best sense which they can bear. 'Tis very far from imagining and contriving evil and mischief against another. To ruine men in their Estates; to blast their Names; to wound their Consciences; to rid the World of them; these are none of Loves contrivances. And as Love carries on no evil designs; so it is not *suspicious that others do*. These suspicions are very bad; for if the mind be full of them, it will be apt to meditate revenge, upon *hardly fancied and supposed* injuries; though the Christian Religion forbids revenging *real* ones. Want of love makes us imagine that others have contrivances against us, to undermine our interest and repute, and to do us some great harm; when indeed the just contrary may be true: and when we think so ill of them, our carriage towards them may be as ill as our thoughts. But love is too full of candour to give way to groundless jealousies. And if this candour did but more prevail; how would Edification be promoted! Suspicious keep the several parties that are among us at a greater distance. Difference in opinions makes the distance; suspicions widen it. Several *Dissenters* are apt to suspect *Episcopal Men* inclined

to *Popery*. Divers Episcopal Men, are apt to think that if ever *Popery* come in, 'twill be brought in upon the back of the Puritans. Different parties are all full of jealousies, as if they were all false unto, and designed to mine utterly one another, and only to set up every one themselves. Now these suspicions unless there be most apparent ground for them, should be abandon'd, and Love will not cherish them, for they weaken the Protestant Religion, and divide the Church against itself.

8. Love rejoiceth not in Iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth. Though our Neighbour is to be loved, yet we are not to love his iniquity, but endeavour by Prayer to God, by Reproofs and Intreaties, and other wayes to reclaim him from his evil and destructive wayes. *Lev. 19. 17. Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart, but shalt in any wise rebuke thy Neighbour, and not suffer sin to be upon him.* And though our Neighbour has shewed himself an Enemy to us; and after fall into some scandalous iniquity whereby he is endamaged, and disgraced; love will hinder us from being secretly glad of it; nay 'twill make us really to pity him, and to mourn for him. What Solomon sayes is much to our present purpose, *Prov. 24. 17. Rejoice not when thine Enemy falleth, neither let thy heart be glad when he stumbleth. Refrain, &c. to rejoice in the sins of others; how hellish is it*
this

this is so far from edifying, that it makes a man exactly to resemble the evil one who is the Churches great Destroyer. This very bad temper, how does it prevail at this day among many persons of different persuasions! When they hear of the scandalous falls of others who are not of *their Way*, they are *puffed up*, as the *Comitians* were, and but too much pleased. 1 Cor. 5: 2. They hope that the repute of their party will be advanced, by the exclamation that is made against those of another Party. And hereby they shew, that they value their own Reputation above the Salvation of a Soul, the Honour of God himself, and the general Credit of Christianity. But where Persons are thus glad at the scandalous sins of others, there is certainly a most *scandalous want* of Charity, which shews it self in proclaiming on the house-tops, what love should make them to cover. Love rejoiceth not in iniquity, but it *rejoiceth in the truth*, and therefore is *truly* for Edification. Truth may be put by an *Hebraism* for *true goodness*, for sincere Righteousness, as the *Antichrist* in the words manifests; or *truth* may respect the reality of love in self. Love rejoiceth in the truth, because it is an enemy to shews and dissimulation. I might also adde another gloss; We must not love any man, or any party, so as to reject *Truth*, but *that* must be own'd with gladness on which side, or where soever found. The

Philoso-

Philosopher did say, *Amicus Socrates, amicus Plato; sed magis amica Veritas.* Socrates is my Friend, and so is Plato, but Truth is more my Friend than either.

9. Love is for the Churches Edification, for it hopes and believes all things. It believes the best of others, until that which is bad is so visible and apparent, that if it does not believe, it must be blind. Though one that is truly charitable, is unwilling to be imposed upon, yet of the two he rather chuses to be deceived through his candour and facility, than to wrong his Brother by a sinister suspicion. And where love for the present cannot believe, yet it will hope. If it sees others to be never so bad, yet it hopes they may come to a better mind, and how earnestly does it pray for their amendment! The Greek Tragedian *Empirides* tells us, He is the best man *ὁς τις ἀνὴρ ἐλπίων*, who hopes always. The Roman Dictator *Fabius Maximus* did a great kindness to the Commonwealth almost ruin'd by *Hannibal*, *quia nihil desperavit*, he did not quite despair in Rome's extremity. Love to the Church will hinder us from giving over all as lost; and hope being kept alive, that the Church in time may become more pure and more united, will put vigour into our endeavours, to promote the Churches Union and Holiness.

10. Love Edifies, for it beareth and endureth all things. It bears the greatest injuries from the

the World, and yet wishes the World well, and it endures unkindness from Brethren, still remaining kind to them; it is not transported by the fancied intolerableness of any injury, so as to render evil for evil; it minds that of the Apostle, *1 Thes. 5. 15.* See that none render evil for evil unto any man, but ever follow that which is good both among your selves and towards all men.

Oh Love! How much want is there of thee in the Church of Christ! and how much does this Church feel for this want! it groans, it languishes, it dies daily, because of thy absence. Return O Love, return! Repair breaches, restore paths to dwell in, edifie the old waste places, and raise up the Foundations of many Generations, for after all the most politick contrivances, Thou wilt be found the Master-builder.

Having done with the reasons which demonstrate that Love is for the Churches Edification, I am in the fourth place to shew the vanity of those excuses that are made for the want of Love.

I. Some say, they are bound to contend earnestly for the Faith, and therefore Mildness and Love in this case are but urged unseasonably, *strive they ought, and strive they will.*

I Answer, That sincere Protestants of all persuasions agree in the same Faith, and their disagreeing among themselves, is the way not to uphold that

Faith,

Faith but to *destroy* it. The Controversies between them is about *Circumstantial*s, and *external modes of Worship*; they all own the same Doctrine of the Gospel, in opposition to the Corruptions and Heresies of Rome. That's a *bad Contention* that does exclude Love. He that believes the Gospel of Christ to be the Gospel of Peace, cannot but follow after Peace; *Fides & Amor, quam bene conveniunt*? How well do Faith and Love agree? both together make the *Breast-plate* of a Christian, 1 *Thes.* 5. 8. Whereby his Heart is armed and secured.

2. Others say, they will *not* halt between two *Opinions*, they will follow God and not *Baal*, they are for Christ and not for *Antichrist*, and are resolved to have *no Charity* for the *Beasts Worshippers*, nor any Communion with them.

I Answer, Do not call that *Idolatry* and *Antichristianism*, which Christ calls not by such a Name. To charge all Conformists with Idolatry, is a heavy Charge, as bold as heavy, and as unreasonable and uncharitable as either. I am sure the Martyrs in Queen *Maries* dayes, though Conformists, were enabled to suffer the rage of Rome, and loved not their Lives unto the Death, that they might bear their Testimony against the Idolatry of Antichrist. Those that affirm a *Form* of Prayer to be a *Spiritual Image*, and consequently a breach of the second Commandment, seem to me to discover a greater strength of *Phancy* than of *Judgment*. I grant, the

the Second Commandment forbiddeth the Worship of the true God by a false *medium* or means, and such a false means is an *Image*, for by this means the *Glory of the incorruptible God is changed into the similitude of a corruptible Creature*, which we are forbidden to fall down to and Worship; so that the *medium* or means forbidden in this Law, is an *object* as well as *means*. Now those who are most for Forms of Prayer, will deny them to be the *objects* of their Worship; their Worship is directed to God alone, and only in the Name of Christ the Mediator. That Reverend Author who asserts a Form of Prayer to be an Image forbidden in the Second Commandment, yet does grant, *That a Christian as Adam, whether Minister or of private place, may by the Gift of Prayer which he hath received, compile to himself a set Form of Prayer, and may use the same for his Prayer whether in publick or in private according to his place.* But if a Form were indeed forbidden, by no means should a man make such a Form of Prayer for himself.

Further, Let me add, that all who cry out against *Antichristianism*, should beware of *Uncharitableness*, which is a great part of it. Rome is full of Cruelty; censures and condemns all that are not of her way, and affirms 'tis impossible that they should be Saved. Those in whom Christian love does most abound, I assure are come farthest out of *Babylon*, and are likeliest to hinder a return thither; what animosities

mostities and divisions will do, I wish that time may not too soon manifest.

3. Others plead, that they are for a *thorough Reformation*, and the purging of all impurities out of the Church of Christ; and they *cannot endure* such as do things by halves only.

I Answer, That in the *Glory* of the Protestant Churches that they are *Reformed ones*, and none of them are so pure, but Reformation may be advanced to an higher degree. The Compilers of the Common Prayer in the *Communion*, acknowledge that in the *Primitive Church* there was a *godly Discipline*, which is wanting among us, and they wish that it may be restored. So that a need of Reformation in Discipline is here plainly confessed, and the thing desired: But a Reformation is regularly to be endeavoured, no man using unwarrantable means, nor transgressing the bounds of his vocation. And when we are talking against Impurity in administrations, (which the more exactly according to the Word of God, the purer, and the purer the better and more effectual) let us not overlook some of the *worst Impurities* of all; Pride, and Envy, and Hatred, and Wrath are the Impurities of the Devil himself; other sins may have more of the *Bruit* or of the *Child*; but these have more of *Beelzebub*; till thou art reconciled to thy Brother, think not that thy Offering will be accepted, *Mat. 5. 24.* while thy Heart is full of bitterness, and Self-concern,

and

and Strife, do not imagine thou canst be a pure Worshipper.

4 Others say, What, shall we Love a Company of *Apostates*, that are for returning to the *Unions* and *Garlick* of *Egypt*, and will receive the mark of the *Beast* it self?

I Answer, That the Scripture should be Studied and understood, or else it may easily be misapplied. 'Twould better become men solidly to prove a thing to be Antichristian, than loudly and boldly to call it so. Shall he be branded as an Apostate, who manifests in his whole Conversation a fear of God, that loves the Lord Jesus in sincerity, that owns the great fundamental truths of the Gospel, and is willing, if called to it, to seal them with his blood; shall he, I say, be branded as an Apostate, because to give a *legal satisfaction* and shew he is no Papist, he sometimes hears the Prayers of the Church, and Scriptures read in a known Tongue? Certainly the Censurer is greater Apostate from Love, than this man is from Truth. Though the well-meaning of Persons is to be well taken, and whatever of God is in them is to be loved and encouraged; yet this is to be disliked, that differences between Protestants are made to seem greater than they are. It does not argue an healing Spirit to call every thing we dislike, *Egyptian* and *Babylonish*. This *uncharitable Censuring*, if it be not the mark of the *Beast*, 'tis the mark of one as

had; you know who is styled *Satan*, the *Accuser of the Brethren*.

Others say, That many who pretend to Religion and Conscience, are *Schismatical and Rebellious*, and Love and Countenance does but harden and encourage them in their pernicious wayes, to the Prejudice both of Church and State.

I Answer, Particular persons who are culpable, let them bear the blame; but why should all Dissenters be judged *Rebels*? how peaceably have they carried themselves for these many Years? how fervently do they Pray for the Kings Life and Prosperity? To Assassinate his Majesty or the Duke of York, they look upon as an action most abominable, and are persuaded that every one that names the Name of Christ, should utterly abhor such a *Villanous Iniquity*. They look upon Solomon not as speaking like a *politick Prince*, but as declaring the mind of the *Holy Ghost*, when he sayes, *My Son, fear thou the Lord and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change*, Prov. 24. 21. They are sensible that the false Teachers in the latter dayes have this Character, that they *despise Government*, that They are *presumptuous and self-willed*, and are not afraid to speak evil of *Dignities*, 2 Pet. 2. 10. Let those who are full of bitter *Invectives* against Dissenters, as if they were *Enemies to Government*, consider what the *Assembly of Divines at Westminster* have declared,

clared; and the Congregational Divines at the Savoy say the same; Confession of Faith, Chap. Of the Civil Magistrate: It is the Duty of People to Pray for Magistrates, to honour their Persons, to pay them Tribute and other Dues, to obey their lawful Commands, and to be subject to their Authority for Conscience sake. Infidelity or Difference in Religion, does not make void the Magistrates just and legal Authority, nor free the People from their due Obedience to him; from which Ecclesiastical persons are not exempted; much less hath the Pope any power or jurisdiction over them in their Dominions, or over any of their People, and least of all to deprive them of their Dominions or Lives, if he shall judge them to be Hereticks, or upon any other pretence whatsoever.

And as for the Charge of Schism, the Dissenters wish there were no such thing in the Churches of Christ; that Terms of Communion might be only Scriptural, and that all occasions of Division might be taken away. They Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and that she may have more True Lovers, and That all may prosper who Love her.

I come in the last place to the Application.

USE I. Of Information: If Love be for the Churches Edification, then,

1. Hence we may be informed, that Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wraths, Strifes, and such

works of the Flesh, tend to the Churches Ruine: they that harbour such sins as these, and are not concerned about the mortification of them, they are frantick Christians, who cast Fire-brands, and Arrows, and Death, doing much mischief to others, but most to themselves.

2. No wonder that Satan who labours to destroy Churches, endeavours to kill Love. He is the envious one that sows ill Weeds, he is the Father of Lies and Errors, he knows Error tends to Division, he sets an Edge on the Passions of men, and makes them more sharp and keen, he is the grand incendiary in Churches, setting all in a flame, and he hopes this flame will consume all before it, nay, burn at last to the lowest Hell.

3. Those Principles are truest and best, that tend to the begetting and increasing of Love. The Church of Christ is little beholding to those who are of narrow Principles, that mind only a part, but not the whole. The Apostle blamed the *Corinthians* for being of such a narrow Spirit, *1 Cor. 1. 12.* Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollo, and I of Cephas; whereas all true Believers should reckon themselves one in God and Christ, and consequently should be for one another.

4. Hence we may be informed, that Love is the more excellent way. Rigour and Fury may force men to a dissembled Compliance, but Love

Love is the way indeed to win them. I don't think it a Credit to the *Alcoran*, that it must be seconded with the knocking argument of an *iron Mace*; the *Spanish Inquisition* shews the weakness of that Religion, which cannot stand unless it has the help of such Cruelty to support it. Certainly that Church which is fullest of Love is the truest and wisest, and most likely to be enlarged. The Apostle prefers Charity before the Faith of Miracles, though these Miracles mightily confirmed the Authority and Verity of the Gospel; nay, he prefers it before the Gift of Prophecy, though Prophecy was the most Edifying of all the Gifts of the Spirit, 1 Cor. 14. 1. He was indeed a Prince among Preachers, and supposes himself better than he was, and to speak with the Tongue of an Angel; yet says he, *Without Charity, I am become as sounding Brass, or tinkling Cymbal*; nay, *If I have not Charity, I gain nothing*, 1 Cor. 13. 1, 2.

USE II. Of Caution, in several particulars.

1. Take heed of what is contrary to Love, as that which is contrary to Edification. Unmercifulness, Cruelty, Rage, Revenge, Bitterness, are so far from becoming Christianity, that they are against Humanity it self. When first sinful Passion begins to stir in thy Heart, *quench the spark*; for behold how great a little fire kindles. Jam. 3. 5. What is contrary to Love, is contrary to thy own Peace,

and may make thee a Disturber of the Church's Peace.

2. Take heed of *saful self-love*. This causes perilous times to overtake the Church of Christ, *2 Tim. 3. 19.* This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves. Self-love turns Godliness into a Form, argues a want of the Power, it makes Religion to be subservient unto base and selfish designs, and hereby the Gospel comes to be suspected, Atheism grows rampant, and the Church must needs languish. Self-love will make you unconcerned for the Honour of God, for the good of man; it will produce a carelessness in you of others welfare, and hinder you from truly minding your own. He that loves no body but himself, and matters not what harms befall others, so himself can but scape, is a pest of the World, unfit for Christian, nay, for humane Society. Antiquity has censured that Speech as infamous, *Eum barbarescum dixisse, si I mere dead, no matter though the World were all a fire.* The Self-lover is of the same temper, if he can but keep what he has, and sleep in a whole skin, he is not at all affected with others Calamities and Afflictions.

3. Take heed of *scandalizing any*. 'Tis the great work of Satan to cause Scandals and Offences, and he shews the depth of his subtilty and malice in the management of this pernicious Engine. He represents God as too

rigorous

vigorous in his Commands, Christ as too much thwarting the glorying of the flesh: He represents Self-denial, and the Cross, as unreasonable and intolerable; and all this is, that man may be offended, and his Conversion to God, and Faith in Jesus may be hindered. Our Lord and Saviour who is the great lover of Souls, saw the mischief of Scandal, and speaks much to prevent it; He pronounces the worst misery of the World, because of offences; but especially binds and fixes the Woe upon *that man by whom the offence cometh*, Mat. 18. 35. At the reading of this, methinks, every mans heart should ake, and he should cry out, as the Disciples every one of them did in another case, Lord, Is it I? Am I the man that thou sayest so unto? does the offence come by Me? 'Tis our duty to love others, but to scandalize them, is to be greatly injurious to them; and that's not an act, a sign of love. Much talk there is of Scandal, and there is much more of Scandal than is talkt of: 'Tis a sore evil that spits its venom every way: It strikes at Jew, at Gentile, and at the Church of God. Therefore the Apostle cautions us against giving offence to any of these, 1 Cor. 10. 32. True Love to our Neighbour will make us avoid Scandal as carefully as a Mariner would a dangerous Rock that may cause a shipwrack. Here I shall lay down some Positions concerning Scandal, that you may have the true

of it, and may flee from it, and the woe denounced upon it.

1. *Every displeasing of another is not Scandal.* 'Tis one thing to offend a man, and another thing to make him offend. Barely to displease and grieve another, is not to scandalize him; for if it were, then those Professors that are most ignorant and peevish, must be perpetually humoured; they must have their wills, else they will be angry and grieved; and the weakest (as one observes) must bear sway in the Church, which they are very unfit to do; and the strongest, even Pastors themselves, must be subject to them; for they are hugely troubled if they are in the least cross'd. Besides, Professors are of different minds; some may be angry and grieved at my doing of a thing, others as much displeased and troubled at my not doing it: Now, if barely to offend another, were Scandal, in this case both Scandal and the Woe belonging to it, might be impossible to be avoided. A man may be offended because I am not of his mind; because of my peaceable temper, because I think not that stiffness and strangeness is the way to unity, but mutual yielding and condescension; forbearing one another in love, Eph. 4. 3. 4. receiving one another, as Christ has received both the one and the other. Here indeed I may be said to displease, but Scandal cannot be laid to my charge.

2. Scandal

2. Scandal is *a putting a stumbling block, or an occasion of falling into sin in another's way.* This is the Apostles definition of Scandal: And with all he cautions against Christians judging and censuring one another, Rom. 14. 13. *Let us not therefore (though of different sentiments and practises in some things) judge one another any more; but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall in his Brethren's way.* When Professors of Religion are loose in their lives, and hereby not only confirm the World in their resolution to be unjust, and proud, and covetous, and prodigal of time, and filthy still; but also convey into the Hearts of other Professors, that such strictness as the Scripture requires is needless; and that men may be saved without such circumspect walking; here is Scandal with a witness, and 'twill be with a vengeance. And as the blinding and stupifying the Conscience of another is Scandal; so the wounding of the weak conscience of another by drawing him to that which he doubts whether lawful to be done, is Scandal likewise. Love here should make us very tender. Those who are for rigorous imposing upon others, should consider that of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 8. 12. *But when ye sit so against the Brethren, and wound their weak Conscience, ye sin against Christ.*

3. Examples of the best are not to be followed with a doubting Conscience. Every man must be

he fully persuaded in his own mind concerning the lawfulness of a thing, before he does it; for whatsoever is not of faith, is sin; and he that doubts is damned, if he eat, Rom. 14. 5. 23. I grant the word for doubts, *δισταλλω* may be translated, He that puts a difference between meats, and so eats against his Conscience, is damned; but if you consider what follows, because he eateth not of faith, it is truly rendred doubts; for doubting is opposed to faith, as well as doing that which undoubtedly is judged unlawful. Thus we find our Lord making an opposition between Doubting and Faith: And the word *δισταλλω* is used to express this doubting, *Mat. 11. 23. Whosoever shall say unto this Mountain, be thou removed, and cast into the Sea, &c. he that doubteth in his heart, shall not do it, but shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith.* Certainly as nothing is to be done against Conscience, so nothing with a doubting Conscience; for he that does a thing doubting, cannot do that thing of Faith. We should not urge others to follow our example, nor to do as we do, till they are fully satisfied as we are; nay we should press the contrary, lest we wound their weak Consciences, *Rom. 14. 13. If thy Brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not Charitably; destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.* By grieved, cannot be understood, sorrow; because

Another does that which the Brother thinks sinful; for this will not *destroy* the Brother: but being *grieved*, implies having ones *Conscience wounded*, and ones *Peace broken*, by following the example of another with a doubting mind. The Apostle exhorts all to have faith concerning the lawfulness of a thing before they do it; cautions against judging and despising one another, though some could do what others could not. And this is the way to prevent scandal, which is so great a piece of uncharitableness. But here I must add, that groundless doubts are signs of weakness, and he is an happy man that is got above them; and information in order to this happiness is very desirable.

4. *Pleasing another so as to occasion his sinning, is Scandal.* The Apostle Peter was a Tempter to Christ, when he thought to please him, and prevent his sufferings; but Christ repelled the temptation presently, and rebuked Peter sharply; *Get thee behind me Satan; thou art my Scandal, thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those things which be of men*, Mat. 16. 22, 23. The same Apostle (as one observes) scandalized the Jews by pleasing them: For fear of offending the weak *Judaizing Christians*, he separated from familiar communion with the *Gentiles*; by which he laid a stumbling block before them, to harden them in the sinful opinion of Separation. A dangerous

rous

rous Scandal it was, whereby *Barnabas* himself was carried away. Love will make us *pleased our Neighbour for his good to Edification*, Rom. 15. 2. But to please him by doing as he does, saying as he says, and so to harden him in his too high thoughts of himself, in his error and uncharitableness, in his dividing Principles, which have a tendency to hinder the lasting settlement and peace of any Church in the World; I say, *thus to please him*, is to scandalize him by not crossing and offending him. A meek and faithful instructing him, though it does anger him, would be a true expression of love to him.

5. In shunning scandal, *special regard must be had to the weak* who are in *greatest* danger. He that is weak falls more easily; and therefore stumbling blocks should not be laid, but removed out of his way. Those that suppose themselves *higher* than others in *light* and *grace*, should be the more condescending to them whom they think much below themselves, and bear with their infirmities. *We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak*, and not to please our selves, Rom. 15. 1. Those that differ from us in judgment have precious Souls, as well as those of our own way; therefore we must take heed of scandalizing them, especially if they are very numerous; We should be wary how we utterly disown a *vast* Body of Christians, as if they were a company of *Heathen*

Heaven men and Publicans, this will confirm them in their enmities and severities against us, as highly reasonable, and they will so fix their eyes upon that in us, which we cannot justify, that they will the less regard what we speak against those things which may strongly be proved to need a Reformation. The more general a scandal is; the more fatal are the effects of it, and the more it proves detrimental to the Church of God.

6. All should pray against *proneſſes to be offended*. Others actions should not make us forward to stumble and fall. As the providence of God towards us, though at present never so dark and intricate and unaccountable, should not make us weary of him, or of his service; because he is a Lord the most gracious, and his service is really the best beyond all comparison; So neither should the carriage of men though never so strange and odd, and unexpected, occasion our sinning nor discourage us in welldoing. Upright men may be astonished at the dispensations of divine Providence, they may be amazed to see the world so full of wickedness, and to behold *ſaith* failing, *love* dying, and *practical Religion* so much ceasing in the Church of Christ; yet they stir up themselves against the hypocrites, they get over the stumbling blocks that are laid before them, they hold on their way and wax stronger and stronger. Job 17. 8, 9. Foolish men! that are

are glad of scandal! that run eagerly up and down, inquiring *who will shew us any thing that may offend us?* They rejoyce at any plea for a sinful course, and greedily catch at any thing that may prejudice them against others that are not of *their way*; nay they are forward to suck in prejudices against Ministry, Ordinances, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. A man that is swift to hear what may scandalize him; that is joyful upon occasions, that make him angry and uncharitable, or any other way to sin; he is like unto one that in a time of war does voluntarily run upon the *Swords point*, or up to the *Canons mouth*; or like one that in a time of Pestilence, does not strive to avoid, but to catch the contagion. A man that should thus be fond of Plague or Sword, you will judge frantick, and he is in a worse sense *frantick*, that is fond of scandal. That's the third Caution, *Take heed of scandalizing any.*

4. Take heed of an *unbridled Tongue*. How mighty an hinderance of love has this little member been! Both Church and State have felt the Smarting and dangerous wounds, which a lawless tongue has given. The tongue of a *Serpent*, of a *Viper*; the tongue that is *all sting*, and carries Poyson and Death in it, is nothing *neer so hurtful*, as the Tongue of a *Liar*, of a *Slanderer*. The Apostle plainly intimates, and the Prophet had done it long before,

fore, that the Sins of the Tongue are the great cause of the badness of the times, 1 Pet. 3. 10, 11. He that will love life and see good dayes, let him refrain his Tongue from evil, and his Lips that they speak no guile, let him eschew evil and do good, let him seek peace and pursue it.

Four things are observable in these words.

1. That an evil Tongue is the disturber of Peace.

2. That 'tis a great indication of guile and hypocrisie.

3. That it very often shortens the Life.

4. That it is a grand Impediment unto our seeing good dayes.

'Tis a vain thing to expect that times should grow better, when tongues grow daily worse and worse; and neither Scripture, Reason, nor Conscience can keep them to the words of truth and soberness.

When there is so much evil in the tongue, how little of love, how little of good can there be in the heart? Would you have the Church of Christ edified? let not your tongues wound any of her members, though of a different perswasion from you. Do you love your Neighbours as your selves? be as backward to speak evil of your Neighbours as of your selves. What our Lord speaks concerning doing, may be applied to saying; whatsoever ye would that men should say concerning you, say you even so of them. He that knew what was

in man, tells us, Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. Bitterness in the language argues a root of bitterness within, which the sooner 'tis pluckt up the better.

Take heed of speaking lies to the prejudice of others. Satan the Accuser has hardly a more exact picture in this world, than a Malicious Lye. Invent not lyes, believe not lyes, report not lies. He that spreads a lye to his Brothers harm, is an hater of his Brother; he may talk of love, but is he a stranger to it, Prov. 26. 28. *A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it, and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.* Spreading of slanders is a sign of hatred. Nay, you are not to speak truth with an evil design; Clamour and railing at the faults of others, makes you faulty as well as they. 'Twere well if instead of publick defamations, there were more friendly, brotherly and private admonitions. That injunction of Christ, *Tell thy Brother his fault between thee and him alone, if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy Brother*, Mat. 18. 15. is neglected at this day, as if it were not in the Bible.

Be not forward to pronounce judgment rashly concerning others. Christ the Judge sayes to Christians, *Judge not*, Mat. 7. 1. You that speak so much of *standing up* for the *Kingly office* of Christ, do not *usurp his place and office* by becoming Judges of your Brethren; do not cast that great command of this King of Kings behind your backs, *Love one another*.

Avoid

Avoid partiality in speaking of others; if you extenuate greater crimes in those of your own party, and endeavour to conceal them, and aggravate lesser things in those of another party, and blaze them abroad; you respect persons, and are convicted of the law as transgressors, Jam. 2. 9. and so far as there is partiality, so far there is hypocrisy, Jam. 3. 17.

O Tongues of Professors! How long will it be ere you be quiet? How long shall your breath be like the East-wind, blasting all about you? When shall all your words be agreeable to the Word of God? when shall your lips feed many, and hurt none? your reproachful, backbiting, railing language, your lies and falsehoods have been your sin and shame, and the shame of Religion; repentance and amendment is absolutely necessary, else Salvation still will stand at a distance. Isa. 63. 8. For he said, Surely they are my people, Children that will not lye, so he was their Saviour.

USE III. Of Exhortation, to abound in Love, which is so much for the Churches Edification. My Exhortation I second with these Arguments.

1. God is Love; his love is unconceivably great towards his whole Church, and every true member of it. There is not the meanest or most mistaking Christian in the World, but

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to unit; Love ties all other vertues together, and makes them more perfect and acceptable, and it unites the members of the Church together, which Church is the Worlds perfection, Psal. 50. 2. *Out of Sion the perfection of beauty God hath shined.*

4. Love is a debt, Rom. 13. 8. *Owe no man any thing, but to love one another.* You are not just to your Neighbour unless you love him, and love to shew mercy to him. He that loves not another, defrauds him of what is due to him; nay, he is not only a Thief but a Murtherer, 1 Joh. 3. 15. *Whosoever hateth his Brother is a Murtherer, and ye know that no Murtherer hath eternal life abiding in him.* And if he that wants love, is a Murtherer, 'tis less to say that he is a Schismarick; but he may truly be called the greatest Schismarick that is most void of love. *Heresis fidei oppositur, Schisma Charitati;* Heresie is opposed to Faith, and Schism to Charity; and if so, then they are furthest from Schism that are fullest of love; and they are most Schismatical, who are fullest of bitterness and rancour against their Brethren.

5. The greater your love is, and the more Catholick 'tis, it makes every one of you the more common good, the more Catholick blessing. The Church is beholding to you, and so is the world: God himself is pleased to see your Charity.

diffusive and active; and your labour of love shall not be forgotten, shall not miss of a reward.

USE IV. Of Direction, How love may be revived, and increased.

1. Observe the great defects of love in you, and be very much ashamed and abased before God. How few of your actions and speeches have favoured of Love! what workings have there been in your hearts contrary to it! Judge not *want* of love a small offence, since 'tis so much call'd for both in Law and Gospel.

2. Seriously lay to heart how much Christ himself is concerned in and for all his Members, though their opinions may be different from yours. This good Shepherd loves all his flock, and he gave his life a ransom for every one of them. Backbite not, discourage not, persecute not, and especially *destroy not* any one for whom Christ died, 1 Cor. 8. 11. Every particular believer should love the Universal Church; and should have an interest in the Universal Churches love.

3. Search the Scriptures that light may be increased. The more true knowledge, the more unity, Eph. 4. 13. All sincere hearts have a strong disposition to agree together in the truths of God, when once they are revealed to them. Pray against *Errors*; for as *Errors* are contrary to

truth

sub (which in all the parts of it agrees with it self) so they often contradict one another, and naturally tend to make divisions.

Be very *humble and self-denyng*. There must be great yielding on all sides, putting up many things, or love will not be revived. *Humble-ness of mind and meekness* are the Companions of Charity, and cherish it exceedingly, Col. 3. 12, 13, 14. Put on as the elect of God bowels of mercies, kindness, *humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any.* Even as Christ forgave you so also do ye, and above all these things put on Charity. Abhor pride which is the cause of contention. That is good counsel which I find in those *Rabbinical Rhythms*, which if followed would increase love.

על ספקי חסד וחסד
על כל מעלה וחסד
בחסד כבוד רע
וכדאש כלל מן חסד

Thus in English:

Let Wisdom above all possessions be,
Before Preferment chuse Humility.
Every ill property be sure to depresse,
But principally self renouncersse.

Mark them which *cause Divisions and Offences*, and avoid them. They that agree in Doctrine, and in the main things of Christianity, should not easily be divided: They should think more of those things wherein they agree, than of those wherein they differ: And be sure to deafen your ears to *Tale-bearers*, whose business is to destroy Love, and sow Discord. The words of a *Tale-bearer* are as Wounds; and how deep do they go? Where no Wood is, the Fire goeth out; and where there is no *Tale-bearer*, the Strife ceaseth, Prov. 26. 20.

Let this be your frequent Petition. That *X* you may be taught of God to love one another. Pray that the Word, which commands Love, may be more deeply engraven in your Hearts, and rule there at all times; and that all *asperating thoughts* and surmises, all *venomous passions* which are contrary to Love, as enemies to you, to the Church, to God himself, may be brought into Captivity unto Christ the Prince of Peace.

USE. V. Of Consolation to the *distracted, drooping, desponding Church* of Christ, and all the sincere Members of it. The grounds of Comfort are these.

1. The Church of Christ shall be upheld, notwithstanding all her Divisions. What heats, what

what Heresies in the Primitive times! If one reads the Catalogue of Errors in *Epiphanius* and *St. Augustine*, which men professing Christianity embraced, and what rents these Errors made, it will be just matter of wonder that the Church was not torn to pieces by her own Members. Satan has been striking at Faith and Charity, and yet still there is a Church, and when he has done his worst, there will be one.

2. The Love of Christ towards his Church is *unchangeable*. The Members may fail in their duty one towards another; but the Faithfulness of the Head never fails. His care is constant: he is the same yesterday and to day, and for ever; Heb. 13. 8. 'Tis said, Job. 13. 1. That Jesus having loved his own that were in the World, he loved them to the end: And this love secured them to the end.

3. There will be no want of love in Heaven. Though Christians may not fancy to travel in one anothers company, yet they are all going towards the same Country, and place of eternal rest; and when they are once come thither, they shall rest from sin and contention, as well as from trouble and affliction. In that glorious place and state, there will be no error, no culpable ignorance remaining; both light and love will be in their perfection; and be-

cause perfect love is there, perfect peace and joy will be there also. *Jerusalem* above is a City indeed that is compact together, strongly founded, for its builder and maker is God; *Heb. 11. 10.* and 'tis to last for ever, and is built accordingly. The triumphant Saints that inhabit there, how near are they brought unto God who is all in all! How closely and inseparably are they knit together in love! *St. Paul* and *Barnabas* will no more fall out, being both in Heaven; and *Luther* and *Zuinglius* are perfectly agreed.

When *St. Augustine*, as he tells us in his *Confessions*, had been disputing with his Mother concerning Heaven, the Crown, the Joys, the Peace, the Pleasures there, his Mothers heart grew warm with Sacred Fire; and that warmth at length was heightened into an Heavenly Rapture; making her cry out, *Quid hic faciam?* What shall I do here below! How shall I with patience stay in a vale of Tears, who have had such a sight of the glory, such a taste of the joys of the New *Jerusalem*! Certainly it should make sincere Christians long to be above; and it should comfort them that it will not be long ere they are above; when they behold the Church on Earth so rent and torn by *Pride* and *Ignorance*, and *envy*, *Lust* and *Passions*; and when withall they remember, that among the innumerable Company of An-

Angels, and all the glorified Saints, there is not the least discord, but a compleat and everlasting Harmony.

ai I have finished my Discourse concerning Love, and the Churches Edification. I shall add a few Verses which I made when Prisoner in the *Massa*. I find that Music relieved Saul when the Evil Spirit came upon him; and comforted the Spirit of a Prophet when it was ruffled and out of order; and perhaps Poetry may have an effect of the like nature. The Verses are these.

NOW use thy liberty, my Mind,
Who art not in the least confined.
The whole Earth over thou mayst go,
And view the All that it can show.
And that great All which thou canst see
Is not enough to satiate Thee.
From Gades to Ganges thou mayst run,
(Thy thoughts much sweeter than the Sun)
And in thy travel working spy
But what is seeing Vanity.
The greedy Worldling spurs no pains,
The morall he has, the less he gains.
To profit others does refuse;
Nay, looks up all from his own use.
Sensual pleasures mixed be
With an inward Austerity.

The

Love Edifies the Body of Christ.

The brutish part they only please,
But are the Mind's snare and disease.
The Ambitious Man strives to climb high,
That he may stand more slippery.
The glist'ring Crowns which Monarchs wear
Have less of Honour than of Care.
Kings World! produce even all thy store,
Thou art indeed a thing but poor.
Nay, Heavens Heirs have felt thy rage
In this, as every former Age.
If worldly an excessive love
As Evil made of, thou dost prove
A Hell, or Shambles unto them
Who dare thee with thy all condemn.
The Church is too much like the World,
Into a strange confusion hurl'd
Envy, and Wrath, and Pride, and Strife,
Imbittering this present life.
By all is plain enough express'd
Arise, depart, here's not thy Rest.
Trample on Earth, then take thy flight,
Immortal Soul! Things out of sight,
Above the Sun, or any Star,
Are worthy of thy thoughts by far.
Let not thy Senses Terrors be,
Nor what suits them insatiate thee.
Open thy eyes, behold thy God;
Rise with thy Lord, what thy abode
May be with him that's Light and Love.
Nay, All in all that are above.

The

Love Edifies the Body of Christ.

The Persecution most fierce
Can no way hinder thy Course
With Heaven: Though in a Dungeon deep
As the Earth's Centre, Foes should keep
The Body close, yet thou art free;
And thy best Friend to visit Thee;
The joyful tokens of his Love,
Prisons are Palaces, do prove;
Nay, Paradises of Delight,
Although they fill Nature fright.
Sorrow is Joy, and Pain is Pleasure;
Disgrace is Honour, Loss a Treasure.
The World when worst, is best of all
To those God does to suffer call.
The New Jerusalem comes down,
Is clearly'st seen when Men most frown;
And with the sharpest Thorns thee Crown;
Take up thy Cross, which is thy Trial,
And taste the Sweets of Self-denial.
God is thy Father, and thy Rest;
Abide with him, and thou art blest.

The following Poem was more lately
Composed.

A
Welcome to Disesteem.

THe World's a Syren, and its sweetest Song
The greatest Wrong.
Th' Applause of Men the Prais'd and dangereth
Like poisonous death.
The Wings of Fame like those of Icarus,
Pernicious.
He that Ambitious is of Estimation,
Shews himself fond of Peril and Temptation.

II.

For most of Men a change is seen as soon
As the Moon.
A word, a look can quench the hottest Love,
And anger move.
The fondest Friend oft turns the worst of Foes,
And fury blows.
Who so does think to make men alwayes kind,
He may as well attempt to hold the Wind.

III. On

On Mountains high the Tempests fiercest are,
And nothing spare.

The tops of loftiest Buildings in a Town
Are soonest down.

He that's Above, is envied to Death
By those beneath.

Ambition does prove a fatal Charm,
And makes a man expose himself to harm.

IV.

Unconstant World! how low should wise men deem
Thy high esteem!

To better had men, Honour has no force,
Makes good men worse.

Honour is fitly styl'd the Foolish Fire
That flies desire;

But fondly follows such as scorn and fly it,
That they may be mislead and ruin'd by it.

What peace and safety is in being low,
The Prudent know.

Christ's Head did fly the Circle of a Crown
And great Renown;

The whole World offered He did refuse,
And Manhood chose.

To whom Wisdom's Pattern can't be folly;
Discontent's no just ground of Melancholy.

VI.

False World! thy ill report I do not deserve,
It shall me serve.

Thy frowns and slanders shall a kindness do,
Not make me rue.

When Friends turn Foes, and Foes more Foes I see,
It weaneth me

From things below, and kills excessive Love,
Where daring my destruction might prove.

VII.

I will the Rage of Froward Men, and Spight,
With Love requite.

It troubles me to see Professors here
Burning like Fire.

I wish I were all Tears to check the Flame,
And quench the same.

If Wrath shut ears against my Ministry,
I will to God for all the louder cry.

N. V.

THE END.

